

THE
HISTORY
OF
GEORGINA NEVILLE;
OR, THE
DISINTERESTED ORPHAN.
A NOVEL.
IN TWO VOLUMES.

BEING
The first Literary Attempt of a YOUNG LADY.
DEDICATED, WITH PERMISSION,
TO THE
Hon. LADY WARRREN.

VOL. II.

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GEORGINA NEVILLE,

A NOVEL.

CHAP. XXI.

Lord Lambert receives a visit from young Mr. Preston.

LORD Lambert had just sat down to breakfast, when his servant informed him there was a gentleman at the door, who called himself Mr. Preston, and said he wished much to speak with Lord Lambert, for his business was urgent. Lord Lambert desired to see him; and he was accordingly

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shewn in. He entered rather with timidity, imagining what he had to communicate would not be very well received; but, as he thought it a matter of necessity, he began by saying, he waited upon Lord Lambert, he was fearful, with rather unpleasant news; but that, as he was above deceiving any person, he could not longer visit Lady Jemima Erwin, in the character of a lover, without acquainting his lordship: adding, he was sure of her consent, if Lord Lambert would give his. "But," continued he, "unless that can be obtained, I shall certainly give her up, though my father will be ready to disinherit me, as he has set his heart upon

upon it." Lord Lambert laughed; and said, he had his entire approbation to do whatever he thought proper respecting Lady Jemima Erwin. "But I hope," continued he, "you will make her a good husband, as she brings you an immense fortune."

While they were speaking, there came an amazing knock at the door. Young Preston immediately heard the voice of his father, bawling—"What! is my boy here? What does he want?" The servants, all staring aghast at him, answered, there was a gentleman above stairs at breakfast with their lord; but that they did not imagine it was his son! sneeringly.

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“ And why not?” returned old Mr. Preston. “ What, I suppose, because I have not got a fine coat on, you think I am nobody; but you are mistaken; for my son is as fine a young man as your lord, for his ears.”

They then all burst into so loud a fit of laughter, that it brought down Lord Lambert, to know what could occasion so much noise. He immediately recollected Mr. Preston, and desired he would favour him with his company at breakfast. Mr. Preston accepted the invitation, and followed Lord Lambert to the drawing-room; where, the moment he entered, he bawled out to his son—“ Oh ! ho ! you

you are here, then! I knew very well I was right, notwithstanding those fellows below, in their laced jackets, would scarce let me in."—"No!" returned Lord Lambert; "I should be exceeding angry with any of my servants, if I thought them capable of behaving with disrespect to my friends."—"Oh! no!" replied the old gentleman, "it was not of any importance; only they thought, you see, as I was in my country dress, that I was not fit company for a lord; and would not believe that Tom was my son, because he was so much finer than me."—"For God's sake, Sir," said young Mr. Preston, "do not say any more! I am really quite

ashamed that Lord Lambert, who has done us the honour to receive us in so polite a manner, should meet with such a return."—"Why, as for that," replied his father, "I quite agree with you, that my lord is a very pretty sort of a gentleman himself; but, as to them there fellows in their laced coats below, why, I must own, I think, if half of them was hanged, it would be so much the better: for, to my certain knowledge, all they care for in this world, is to powder their pates, and grease their stomachs; and, if I was a person of quality, would no more keep so many of them, than I would fly up into the air." Then turning to Lord Lambert,

bert, he said—“ You must take my advice, and away with them all out, but one, and a boy ; that is quite sufficient; and then they will find something better to do, than to spend so much time in frizzing and powdering their pates.”

Young Mr. Preston was ready to die with shame during his father's furious harangue ; and endeavoured to change the conversation, by saying, he had waited on Lord Lambert, to acquaint him with his intended marriage with Lady Jemima Erwin ; and that his lordship was extremely friendly, and did not make the least objection.

“ Well, did not I tell you so, son ?”

resumed

resumed Mr. Preston. "I know very well that my lord here did not like her."—"I hope Lady Jemima may be very happy," replied Lord Lambert; "and I have not the smallest doubt but she will be so with your son."—"Well, then," replied Mr. Preston, "as it is so, I must say, my lord has behaved like a lord," turning to his son, and saying—"Has he not, my boy?"

The poor son was covered with confusion at his father's vulgarity; and begged he would not continue a conversation which, he was convinced, must be very irksome to Lord Lambert. "Not it, indeed," returned

Mr.

Mr. Preston ; “ he has more sense than to take any thing amiss, that such a plain country-gentleman as I says.

He knows more of manners; while such boobies as you are always offended, when nothing is meant.”—

“ Lord, Sir !” repeated young Mr. Preston, “ do, for Heaven’s sake, desist ! What will Lord Lambert think, who, I am convinced, was never before so ill entertained ?”—“ Think ! why, my life for it, he thinks me a very honest, plain-spoken man. Why, I tell you, my lord never expected me to have court-behaviour. Why, there, it is just the same thing when Lady Je-
mima dines with us—Tom never thinks that I behave right ; and there

he

he keeps looking and winking at me, and even kicking me under the table: but I never stop; for I know, for all his game, he owes his rich wife to me. He never would have got her, if I had not complimented as I have; for she, poor thing! expects it. As to Tom, he sits mimping and screwing, and looking so shy: he would never have gained her, by only now and then saying—"How very well Lady Jemima looks to-day!" But I act quite different; for I say, plump out, that Lady Jemima is, to be sure, the very beautifulst woman in the world: and she, poor thing! only simpers and smiles, thinking it all true."

"Well,"

“ Well,” replied Lord Lambert, “ I sincerely believe I shall ask your advice, when I mean to take a wife; for you seem to have quite the knack of pleasing the ladies.”—“ Aye, aye,” replied Mr. Preston, “ you young fellows are always fancying yourselves so very clever; but we old ones must be the wisest.”—“ True,” replied Lord Lambert; “ that does not admit of doubt.”

Young Mr. Preston now began to think it time to take leave; and accordingly wished Lord Lambert a good morning. The father then began to move; and said, he hoped his lordship was not affronted at any thing

thing he had said, for that he really meant nothing. Lord Lambert replied, so far from it, that he hoped he would not forget him, but would take an early opportunity of calling upon him again. Mr. Preston shook him by the hand violently; and said that, notwithstanding he was a lord, he was one of the honestest fellows he knew; and he wished him as well as he did Tom, for what he could tell. They then took their leave; and Lord Lambert was not sorry at being released, notwithstanding he had been so well entertained with the very eccentric manners of old Mr. Preston. But, the moment the old gentleman again beheld the servants, he could not

not refrain, although his son exhorted him to come home with him. He said he would speak to them; and accordingly began, by saying—“ Aye, aye, you are a fine pack! but you will not remain here much longer, I can tell you. I have been telling your lord what a set of useless fellows he has got about him; and he seemed quite of my way of thinking.”

The servants looked at one another, and then at Mr. Preston, wishing to know what he meant. At last, he said—“ His lordship is quite determined to off with a good half of you, at least; for, he says, the best part of your time is taken up in frizzing

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your pates, and making your shoes
shine." One, that was more bold
than the rest, then came forward;
and, looking rather confidently,
asked—" Pray, Sir, did my lord de-
fire the favour of you to turn steward,
and discharge his servants? Because,
if his lordship did, I must say, you are
not very ready at the business; and
we servants expect to be treated with
propriety, as much as our betters."—
" Why," replied Mr. Preston, quite
in a rage, " I never in my life saw so
impudent a varlet as you! For a far-
thing, I would give you the best cane-
ing you ever had in your life."—" I
wish you would," continued the ser-
vant; " for, notwithstanding your
thread-

thread-bare coat, I dare say you are rich, and I should stand a chance to get a little of your money by that means."

Mr. Preston, finding he had met with more than his match, thought it most prudent to retreat; but took care, as he went out, to say, he was determined Lord Lambert should discharge him, if he did not any of the rest. They all then joined in a loud laugh at what had passed.

C H A P. XXII.

Miss Malcomb prevails on Lady Jemima Erwin to join with her in a plan she had formed to set Georgina against Lord Lambert.

LADY Jemima Erwin, who of herself would have been perfectly inoffensive, had been so extremely exasperated against Georgina by Miss Malcomb, that she was now ready to agree to any proposal her utmost malice could invent; and told her not to mind any expence, as she would discharge every thing if she approved of the plan. Miss Malcomb, then, had full scope for her malice; which had now

now been raised to such a pitch by her ill success in getting her from Mrs. Haines, as Georgina was now evidently more pleasantly situated, and in a line of seeing the first company, Lady Newbery being remarkable for the elegance of her assemblies.

This thought, then, determined Miss Malcomb not to rest long before she formed some plan to prevent Georgina from enjoying her present happiness; and she was much delighted at Lady Jemima's concurrence, as by that means no pecuniary wants could intervene, or prevent any scheme she might have in view.

Thus every thing being arranged to her satisfaction, as Lady Jemima had agreed not to spare expence, there was nothing remaining but to set her invention to work; which, the moment she had accomplished, she hurried to Lady Jemima, to inform her of, and obtain her approbation: this was granted as soon as the request was made, Lady Jemima being much too indolent to trouble herself with either the impropriety or ungenerosity of the transaction.

What Miss Malcomb particularly wished, was, to prevent a marriage taking place between Lord Lambert and Georgina: for which purpose,
she

she concluded, nothing could be so effectual as, by some artful means, to give them a bad opinion of each other. A plan of this kind, she was aware, would be attended with danger; notwithstanding which, she was determined to persevere at any rate, as she could not endure the thoughts of Georgina's becoming the wife of Lord Lambert: for, by such an alliance, she must inevitably take place of herself, as Miss Malcomb was the intended bride of Sir Harry Freeman.

Poor Sir Harry, who was himself both good-natured and harmless; and who, if his coat sat neat, and his hair
was

was elegantly dressed, looked upon all other considerations as frivolous intruders upon his pleasures and happiness; had not the smallest suspicion of the malicious disposition of his intended wife; but concluded that, as she was a pretty woman, and had a handsome fortune, such recommendations were quite sufficient to ensure happiness. Thus, without mature deliberation, the thoughtless Sir Harry fixed his affections on one of the most artful women in the world, and one who never felt so happy as when she was rendering miserable some object or other by her malicious plans.

She

She had now planned a scheme of wretchedness for Georgina, and intended putting it in immediate practice; naturally concluding, there was no time to be lost in an affair of such importance. She had much business to transact on the occasion, as Lady Jemima left every thing to Miss Malcomb, except the expence—that she insisted upon being entirely her own. Miss Malcomb made no objection to that proposal, as she liked every part of the business better than the expence; and, as her plan could not be managed without great loss of time, she was delighted at having Lady Jemima to be answerable for the part she was about to act, as she could not possibly

possibly be of any assistance in carrying on the plan.

Miss Malcomb had, when a child, a young girl, that lived with her as a kind of assistant in the nursery. She had been bred up in a convent, and had a pleasing address; which, added to her beauty, rendered her the very object for the plan which Miss Malcomb had in contemplation. She had been married since she left Miss Malcomb; and was now a young, beautiful widow, with three children, the eldest of which was but four years. She lived a few miles from town, which made it inconvenient; but trifling difficulties were not considered

by

by Miss Malcomb, when she had in view a scheme of this kind. The young woman was to have fifty pounds, if she had address enough to paint her situation, and the villainy of Lord Lambert, in a manner that could make Georgina consider him as a profligate, bad character; and, of course, would make her give up the idea of the connection, whatever misery she might endure from such a resolution.

Miss Malcomb was convinced the scene that was to be opened to the artless Georgina would have a powerful effect, as she knew her to be possessed of very great sensibility. She then hoped

hoped that pity for the unfortunate object, added to the love she was to pretend she bore Lord Lambert, would excite in Georgina both hatred and disgust. These consequences, she judged, would be the natural result of the interview Mrs. Nelson was to have with Georgina.

This deceitful plan being now quite settled, Miss Malcomb began to consider for herself, and think of the necessary arrangements for her match with Sir Harry. Lady Jemima was very much delighted with the thoughts of Georgina's being, as she termed it, outwitted; for, notwithstanding she had given up Lord Lambert

ber herself, she could not endure that he should marry Georgina: for, in reality, though she would not confess it, she preferred Lord Lambert to Mr. Preston; but, being a woman of neither delicate feelings, nor strong sensibility, it was very immaterial to her who she married. If permitted to dress as fantastically as her whimsical fancy could invent, and folly could wish, she would be both as satisfied and happy as so unfeeling a character could possibly be: for, as strong feelings are a source of great misery, so have they, in as high a degree, the contrary effect. Lady Jemima had this consolation, that if her happiness was not so intense as that of many

others ; yet, as she was excluded from all real misery, it was in a great degree a compensation.

Miss Malcomb was delighted at the prospect of her scheme's taking place ; but, as the young woman and her children were in very great want of clothes, she must get new ready-made apparel for them all, to make their first appearance in, as Georgina could never be persuaded that Lord Lambert's mistress and children could be so neglected as to want common necessaries.

All now depended on the young woman's being capable of carrying on the artful

artful tale, that had been so skilfully invented by Miss Malcomb, with that probability that was necessary to gain the point. She was to tell Georgina, that she was the daughter of a clergyman in the neighbourhood of Lord Lambert, who had long paid her great attention, and at last prevailed upon her to go to town with him ; that she had been in lodgings these five years, and these were his children ; that she had never found any alteration in his affection for her till very lately ; that she heard he was going to be married, and could not otherwise account for the great change in his behaviour to her.

From this circumstance, Miss Malcomb expected that all would succeed, as she knew Mrs. Nelson's distress would of course make her extremely anxious that the story might appear plausible: added to which, a detection would be terrible, as it would expose them all to the everlasting ridicule and contempt of Lord Lambert and Georgina, as well as to the generality of their acquaintance.

These thoughts rather damped Miss Malcomb, and made her insist that, on no account whatever, is she to give up Lady Jemima, or her, as the projectors of the scheme. This she promised

mised faithfully not to be prevailed upon to do; saying, she must be the most ungrateful of women to expose them, after their unparalleled goodness to her—as they had taken a lodg-ing for her, and allowed her something to live on for the time they ex-pected it would take to finish this wicked scheme. But, if Georgina should not listen or give credit to Mrs. Nelson, it would determine them to send her immediately back to the country, which would render it quite impossible for any person to find out who she was; and, of course, the whole business would die.

Miss Malcomb then told Mrs. Nelson, that, as she had so well arranged every thing, she would now leave the success entirely to her prudence; adding, that as Georgina was a remarkably unsuspecting character, she had not a doubt of success, if Mrs. Nelson managed with discretion. Mrs. Nelson again promised most faithfully to do every thing according to Miss Malcomb's direction, and also with the utmost discretion.

Miss Malcomb being now quite satisfied, they parted mutually happy; notwithstanding their reasons were very different, as the extreme poverty of Mrs. Nelson was in some degree an **excuse**

excuse for allowing herself to be so treacherously employed. She looked at her children, and all other considerations vanished in a moment.

CHAP.

C H A P. XXIII.

Mrs. Haines is very unhappy at her unkind behaviour to Georgina, and makes an apology to her for it.

MRS. Haines, after the departure of Georgina, rather felt ashamed of her behaviour; but considered that, as she was to return there, she could easily make an excuse, if she found herself disposed so to do. This consideration made her quite easy till five o'clock came, and no Georgina. She then found, from her extreme anxiety, that she really loved her; and could not help reflecting, that, from her very unkind

unkind behaviour, great mischief might follow, as she could not imagine where she was.

Thus did she keep repenting and fretting herself to death, for what she could not now prevent. The servant then came to inform her dinner was on the table. She enquired, whether Miss Neville said she should dine at home? The servant said, that Miss Neville had said nothing to him, except that she did not wish him to attend her where she was going. Mrs. Haines then sent wherever she thought it probable for Georgina to be, but without success. At length the note arrived; which was wrote with so much

much kindness, that Mrs. Haines burst into tears, exclaiming—" Then I have lost my sweet girl for ever!" She next enquired, who brought the note? The servant answered, it was a porter delivered the note, and said it required no answer.

Mrs. Haines grew still more unhappy, and would have given the world to know where she was. She then recollect~~ed~~ed, that as the clothes were to be sent for the next morning, she should of course hear where Georgina was; she therefore determined to go to her, and endeavour to prevail on her to return with her, as she now was convinced that half what

what Miss Malcomb said was the consequence of envy. She could not conceive where she had so immediately fixed, as she was persuaded she would not go any where that was the least improper. She never recollects Lady Newbery; and, if she had, she knew Georgina's pride would not let her solicit an asylum from a friend, whatever might be her situation. All these considerations made her very unhappy; as, whatever should be the fate of Georgina, she now could not help considering herself the occasion of it, from her very unfriendly behaviour.

While she was thus ruminating on
what

what had happened, she was surprized by a very loud knock at the door. Lady Jemima Erwin was announced. Mrs. Haines, who was by no means intimate with Lady Jemima, could not account for her making her an unexpected visit ; but Lady Jemima soon made her understand the occasion of it, by saying, the instant she entered—
“ Oh Lord ! how do you do, my dear Mrs. Haines ? I am sure I ought to ask your pardon a thousand times for this impertinent intrusion ; but, to tell you the truth, I took the liberty of waiting on you, to see the young lady that is with you. I suppose you must know she is my rival, as she is very soon to be married to Lord Lambert.

bert. I wished to give her some friendly information, as I find she behaved very handsomely respecting me; and, as I am soon to be married to Mr. Preston, of consequence her match with Lord Lambert cannot be any concern to me. I know this confession will give her pleasure."

Mrs. Haines sighed, and said, Miss Neville was not then at home; but, the moment she returned, would take care to acquaint her of Lady Jemima's kind visit.

" Oh, dear!" repeated Lady Jemima, " I must own, I think her a beautiful girl, and really wish she may

be very happy with Lord Lambert ; and, as he was by no means the kind of man I should wish for my husband, I can see no reason why either of us should not chuse for ourselves ; and, as I began, surely he had a right to follow my example."

" True, Madam," replied Mrs. Haines ; who now was convinced of Georgina's propriety of behaviour to Lady Jemima, and still more hurt at what had happened. She then said—
 " Miss Neville is a most amiable girl ; and I am very well satisfied you would like her better, were you acquainted with her, as she is very deserving your esteem."

" Indeed,"

“Indeed,” replied Lady Jemima, “I have not the smallest doubt of the truth of what you say; and beg you will bring her to see me very soon, as I already like her, from what I heard Mr. Preston say of her this morning. Lord Lambert had told him; and you will allow that was good authority for me to form a favourable opinion upon: and must confess, before I heard those particulars, Miss Neville was a very different character in my estimation.”—“Why so?” replied Mrs. Haines, who at once suspected Miss Malcomb. “Why,” returned Lady Jemima, “she had been reported to me as a very fly, artful girl: and I was also informed, she had

taken the utmost pains to gain the affections of Lord Lambert from me; which I now find was a great falsehood, as Lord Lambert declared to Mr. Preston, that Miss Neville never would receive his addresses, until she was confirmed all was settled concerning me, and that I really gave up any claim to Lord Lambert. I cannot say," continued Lady Jemima, " but that I was extremely struck with the uncommon disinterestedness of such a conduct, and could not do less than pay her this visit of acknowledgement: at the same time, to beg she will now look upon me as her friend, and hope you will do me the favour

to

to acquaint her with what I have said."

Mrs. Haines promised to tell Georgina of Lady Jemima's visit, and also the purport of it. Lady Jemima then took her leave, and left Mrs. Haines still more full of regret at the unworthy part she could not help thinking she had acted by Miss Neville. This thought, added to the anxiety which she was so possessed with to know where she was, had oppressed her so extremely, that she was really ill. But she, however, determined in future to pay no attention to the opinions of the world, but rest upon her

own judgment in the choice of her friends.

In the morning, about eleven o'clock, this much wished-for note arrived; wherein Georgina expressed her gratitude to Mrs. Haines for the many favours she had conferred upon her, and informed her she was with Lady Newbery. Mrs. Haines was much affected on the receipt of this note, and determined immediately to go to Lady Newbery's, and make her peace with Georgina, by confessing the occasion of her behaviour. She went, and was so fortunate to meet with Lady Newbery and Georgina at home, and alone. She flew to her young

young friend, and was received by her with as much kindness as if nothing had happened. This unexpected amiableness in the manner of Georgina had such an effect upon Mrs. Haines's spirits, that she burst into tears, and said—“ Can my dear Miss Neville forgive me? Can she behold me without contempt, after a behaviour that was so unmerited ? ” Georgina kindly took her hand, and begged she would not again name the subject ; at the same time declaring, she should never more think on what had happened.

Mrs. Haines was so extremely distressed, that Georgina thought the
appearance

appearance of Lady Newbery would give a turn to the conversation. She accordingly rang the bell, and desired the servant would acquaint Lady Newbery Mrs. Haines was there. Mrs. Haines had just time, before Lady Newbery came down, to say, that as Miss Neville was so good to forgive her unkind behaviour to her, she would permit her to hope that she would now be looked upon as a friend, which no future art could have the least effect upon: that whatever unforeseen misfortunes might attend Georgina, begged she would freely apply to her, as both her advice and purse were at her command,

By

By this time, Lady Newbery made her appearance, and the conversation became general. Mrs. Haines then acquainted them with the visit she had received from Lady Jemima Erwin; and said, she should be very happy to accompany Miss Neville, whenever she pleased to appoint a day, to call upon Lady Jemima. It was then fixed for the next morning; and Mrs. Haines took her leave.

Georgina now flattered herself that her misfortunes were at an end, as she concluded another fortnight would make her the wife of the amiable Lord Lambert; little imagining there remained

mained any obstacle to prevent their happiness.

While thus reflecting, they were interrupted by the arrival of Colonel Simmons, who had not long returned from the East Indies. He was an elegant looking man, of about thirty-five; his manner was extremely pompous, and his dress unnecessarily expensive. He viewed Georgina with great attention; which she perceiving, took the first opportunity to withdraw from his observation. When she was gone, he immediately enquired of Lady Newbery who that beautiful creature was? She replied—
The young lady he had seen was a

Miss

Miss Neville; and that she was shortly to be married to Lord Lambert. "She is a very fortunate girl," continued Lady Newbery, "as she is an orphan without any fortune; and is beloved, I will venture to say, by one of the most elegant young men in England, added to his rank."

"Fortunate, do you call her!" returned the Colonel. "I cannot look upon it in that light, as I think her charms sufficient to command anything."—"Do you?" replied Lady Newbery; "I own, her eyes are very fine, with the addition of an amiable, mild countenance; but, for real beauty, I cannot say I ever saw that in

Miss

Miss Neville. But you are by no means singular, as she is vastly admired by your sex. We women, you know, are more critical in our observations upon one another."—" So I perceive," replied the Colonel; " but I should think the whole world must be of my way of thinking. I have seen a great deal of beauty, but I never saw so bewitching a creature! and, for my part, I detest what you call a regular beauty."

" Oh! so do I ; but do not by any means call Miss Neville a beauty. I think her manners remarkably amiable; and there is a simple elegance in her behaviour that infinitely surpasses

passes the art of education. But all this is to no purpose, as I assure you she is engaged to Lord Lambert; and, I think, I may venture to affirm, that the whole world could not make any change in her sentiments, they are so unalterably fixed. Their affection is mutual; and it is a match of love on both sides, which is very uncommon in the present age: the general requisite for fashionable marriages meaning nothing more than a lucrative establishment, united to high connections."

" Your observation," returned the colonel, " is very just. Affection is not now considered as an ingredient

that is the least necessary; and from this great error may we not trace the source of the many miserable beings which are daily seen in the marriage-state?"—"It is much to be regretted, certainly," replied Lady Newbery; "and yet I cannot perceive how it is to be conquered, while luxury and dissipation reign triumphant: for, if we make the case our own as a father or mother, how could we, in the present age, withstand the temptations of fortune? Should we not esteem it above all other considerations, and endeavour to prevail with our children to think with us?"

"Very true," replied the colonel;
"it

“ it is natural to fall in with the times, let them be ever so absurd and contrary to reason.” He then took his leave, saying, he had many visits to make; but that, as there were few houses that contained a subject so perfectly agreeable, of course he should have no reason to pay such long ones elsewhere. Lady Newbery smiled at the observation, and he withdrew.

C H A P. XXIV.

Repents of having agreed to be of the party with Miss Malcomb against Georgina.

LADY Jemima's match being now quite settled with Mr. Preston, she could not help feeling much hurt at the thoughts of the wicked plan which Miss Malcomb had invented to render poor Georgina miserable. She much regretted the part she had promised to take; and determined to send for Miss Malcomb, to inform her of her intention.

This

This change in Lady Jemima's opinion of Georgina was the consequence of what Mr. Preston had related to her from Lord Lambert. Lady Jemima was weak, and of course easily led by the art of such a woman as Miss Malcomb; but, when she heard from Mr. Preston of the very disinterested behaviour of Georgina, she could not help lamenting that she had engaged in so base a design. These thoughts determined her immediately to send to Miss Malcomb, and beg of her not to put in practice her intention.

Miss Malcomb came directly, imagining that Lady Jemima wished to

know how she proceeded in the business; but was extremely disappointed, when she found Lady Jemima had repented, and told her, without ceremony, that she would have nothing to do with so scandalous an affair; that she was sure Mr. Preston would never forgive her, if he knew her capable of so ungenerous and base an action. Miss Malcomb was highly exasperated; and declared she could not on any account whatever retract, as she had been at the expence of equipping; and, for what she knew, all might be over, as she supposed, by this time, Mrs. Nelson had been with Georgina. "Therefore," continued she, with contempt,

contempt, “ your repentance has visited you too late.”

Poor Lady Jemima, who, though both vain and weak, was possessed of a good heart, declared she was very unhappy, and would give the world she had not been taken in to be a party concerned in so very malicious and unjustifiable a plan. Miss Malcomb laughed ; and told her, it was too late now for her squeamish fits, as she was convinced the plan, that she so much regretted, was put into execution before this time; at least, she hoped so.

Fanchon, who was acquainted with
the

the whole transaction, and who wished Lord Lambert married to any body except her lady, thought she would speak, perceiving Lady Jemima was an unequal match for Miss Malcomb. She began by saying—“ Vell, for my part, I don’t pretend to be a judge of dese tings; but I you’d not for de world do no such ting: for, ven I went to bed, I should lay vake all de night, tinking of how vicked I vas!”

Miss Malcomb was now quite irritated; and, turning to Lady Jemima with contempt, said, she wondered how she could be so mean as to let her servant into her secrets, and allow her to be impertinent to her friends.

Lady

Lady Jemima replied, that, as to her letting Fanchon into her secrets, she was happy enough not to have any that were worth keeping; but that she must allow, the opinion Fanchon had given on this subject was rather to her credit than otherwise.

They were then interrupted by a servant coming to acquaint Lady Jemima that Mr. Preston was in the drawing-room. Lady Jemima desired him to say, she would wait on him immediately. Miss Malcomb and she accordingly went down together. The old gentleman then met them at the door, calling out—“ O !
here

here you are, looking as smart as a carrot!"

Miss Malcomb, who was extremely mortified at the result of her visit, looked with the utmost contempt at Mr. Preston, and also at Lady Jemima. He did not, however, regard that; but said—" I came to tell you that Lord Lambert dines with us to-day: for, you must know, that our Tom and he are the greatest friends that ever were; and I cannot but say, it is my pride that Tom should keep such high company. For, as I often say, what is to be got by looking below us? I never grudges any thing that is proper for such as he. Why, there

there is Tom has hired a man, look you, to dress the dinner; and I said nothing against it, because he insisted it was right: for, he said, he was sure my lord had never been used to dinners dressed by women. For my part, I should think Old Nick himself could not find out the difference; for, to my way of thinking, when a thing is roasted, why it is roasted."

Miss Malcomb, who had with difficulty kept her countenance all this time, now burst out into so violent a fit of laughter, that Mr. Preston could not help observing it; and, going up to her, said—" Well, I am glad I have made you so merry; for you looked

looked confoundedly cross and in the dumps before. But I can tell you," continued he, " laughing becomes you best, as it gives you an opportunity of shewing those white pegs of your's.—Come," continued he, " will you like to make use of them with us to-day? I am sure Tom will be very glad to see you; and, I can tell you, the dinner is to be as good a one as any lord in the land could give. When I do things, I do not like to do them like a scrub."

Miss Malcomb was ready to die with laughing, but endeavoured to conceal it; and said, she should be particularly happy to have the honour
of

of waiting on him, had she not been unfortunately engaged. "Why, as for the honour," repeated Mr. Preston, "I cannot think but that you are making your game, when you say that to such a plain kind of man as me: but this I can say, that if you come, why, you will be heartily welcome."

Miss Malcomb thanked him again; and Lady Jemima endeavoured to turn the conversation, by saying, she heard Lord Lambert was very soon to be married to Miss Neville. "So I hear," replied Mr. Preston. "What a pretty girl she is! Tom shewed her

me the other day. How fly my lord was! he kept it all snug to himself. I hear she has not a penny of fortune!"—"No," says Miss Malcomb; "that's true enough! She owes a great deal to her pretty face! Does she not?" turning to Mr. Preston; who said—"Why, as for that, she has not got him yet, so we cannot tell any thing of the matter; for, as the saying is, "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush!"

"That's true enough," returned Miss Malcomb; "she may yet meet with a disappointment, as you say: and, you know, it is all owing to Lady Jemima that she had any chance
of

of Lord Lambert ; for, certainly, if she had not changed her mind, Lord Lambert would never have changed his ”—“ Why, as for that, I must say, I believe you are misinformed ; for I do not think he ever, what you call properly, loved Lady Jemima. And so I must say, I think it is better as it is ; for, as Lady Jemima is born a lady, why her marrying a lord, for the sake of his being a lord, would be a foolish sort of a business, as she is a lady without his help. That is sufficient ; and I think she has done what I call the right thing, to chuse a good sort of young fellow, like my son, that will know how to make much of her.”

Lady Jemima said, she was perfectly satisfied with her choice. "And," continued she, looking at Miss Malcomb, "I hope you are so too with your Sir Harry Freeman?"—"Sir Harry Freeman!" repeated Mr. Preston; "why, as for him, I cannot say, if I was a lady, that he would be exactly my choice; for, in my opinion, he is but a poor, half-starved looking piece of goods when dressed, which he always is to a pin's point, as the saying is."

"Well, you know," replied Miss Malcomb, "tastes differ; and I must own, I think any defect better than that of vulgarity, and it is very difficult

cult not to run into either extreme."—

"True, Madam," returned Mr. Preston, who now perceived she meant him. "I never thinks much about the opinion of a parcel of young girls; for, though I wear a plain coat, I am, perhaps, as good a gentleman as those that wear a finer." He then looked at his watch; and said, he must be gone, as he had got to dress for my lord."

That was just what Miss Malcomb wished, as she intended staying him out, that she might have an opportunity of again speaking to Lady Je-mima, to request that, if she would not be concerned in that affair, she

would get her to promise not to expose her in the business.

Lady Jemima had followed Mr. Preston out; and, when she returned, Miss Malcomb began upon her immediately, saying — “ Good God! Lady Jemima, how can you so easily look over the excessive vulgarity of Mr. Preston? I own myself, that I could not bear the idea of calling such a creature my father !” — “ Why, I don’t know what to say about that,” replied Lady Jemima; “ every body must agree with you that he is extremely eccentric, but we all know he is really a gentleman; and what is much more estimable to me, is, that

that he possesses a good heart: for though, in his own expences, he appears remarkably penurious, yet I have known him even to be lavish in his donations in cases of distress."—

" Well, if that accomplishment will make up to you for the want of common behaviour, you are easily pleased! For my part, I should be terribly afraid of the son's taking after the papa," said she, with a sneer; " for notwithstanding the superiority of his education, every person of understanding will allow the force of example to be very powerful in it's effects."

" I cannot see the truth of what you assert," returned Lady Jemima;
" but,

“ but, was Mr. Preston a thousand times more extraordinary than he is, it would by no means prejudice me against his son, as he is certainly a most amiable young man ; and, out of doubt very well looking.”

“ Well,” continued Miss Malcomb, “ every body should learn to judge what concerns their own happiness. But, a propos,” continued she, “ about Miss Neville, you know. Are you determined not to keep your word about the expence ? because you must recollect what you promised.”— “ I do perfectly recollect having made the promise,” repeated Lady Jemima ; “ but can assure you, I

now

now most heartily repent of it, as I can by no means answer to myself having any part in so base a scheme; and beg you will not urge me farther, as I now declare, I entirely relinquish the promise I made to you."

"Good God!" exclaimed Miss Malcomb, quite confounded at the determined manner she observed in Lady Jemima, "I cannot think what has happened to you since I saw you last! I really believe you have turned Methodist, you are so precise and cautious of what you say and do. What is to become of me? I am left quite in the lurch, and that at the critical moment! It has cost me near a hundred

dred pounds to fit out Mrs. Nelson and her brats; and must say, I think it extremely shabby of you to be off now."

" That is by no means my reason; for I would give you double the sum for any other purpose; but all your persuasions will not prevail with me to have any thing to do in the business: I really am quite determined."

Miss Malcomb, finding it was to no purpose to contradict her any farther, began to think it would be necessary to prevail with Lady Jemima, at least, to be silent on the subject, as it was impossible for her now to retract.

tract. She therefore begged, if she would not assist, that she would not be the cruel cause of her being exposed. Lady Jemima hesitated; but, at last, said, she would not herself name the subject; but that she would by all means advise Miss Malcomb to give up a scheme so replete with ill-nature and deceit. But Miss Malcomb said, as it had gone so far, she was determined, let the event be ever so disagreeable, not to recede. Lady Jemima then offered to pay the whole expence, if she would have the prudence to give it up: but she refused positively; asserting, that she was aware of the worst consequences that could result from it, and would

meet

meet them all, even without her assistance.

She then took leave of Lady Jemima, who was very glad to be released from her. In going out, she met Mrs. Haines and Georgina, who said, they were going to make a visit to Lady Jemima. Miss Malcomb was much provoked at this, as she was fearful that Lady Jemima would betray her. They were admitted; and Lady Jemima met Georgina with the greatest good-humour; and said, she hoped they should be soon intimate friends. Georgina thanked her. Lady Jemima then said, she could not omit taking the first opportunity of
thanking

thanking her for the very disinterested and handsome behaviour respecting herself and Lord Lambert. Georgina bowed ; and said, she could not perceive that she merited any praise, as what she had done was no more than in justice was due to Lady Jemima.

The conversation, then, became general; and Mrs. Haines said, she must wish Lady Jemima a good morning, as she had other visits to make. Lady Jemima then shook hands with Georgina, and begged she might have the pleasure of seeing her often. Georgina thanked her, and they withdrew. Mrs. Haines remarked, that Lady

VOL. II. H Jemima

Jemima was much improved. "I do not mean," continued she, "in her person, but in her manners. Her behaviour used to be very vain and affected; but, to-day, I could not perceive any thing of the kind."— "No, indeed!" replied Georgina; "she appears to me perfectly good-humoured." Mrs. Haines then accompanied Georgina as far as Lady Newbery's, and wished her a good morning.

C H A P. XXV.

Miss Malcomb is much irritated against Georgina, from the very cold manner of Lady Newbery's behaviour to her.

WHEN Georgina returned home, Lady Newbery told her there was company expected at dinner. "Lord Lambert, of course, is one," continued she; "and your new admirer, the colonel, is also invited; of consequence, you may expect to be greatly attended to between them." Georgina smiled; and said, she would dispense with the attention of the latter, as she was by no means a coquette;

H 2 and,

and, indeed, had neither eyes, ears, or attention, except for Lord Lambert. Lady Newbery laughed ; and said, that would not prevent their having the pleasure of admiring her. " Colonel Simmons is very much charmed with you, indeed," continued Lady Newbery ; " so highly, that I am convinced he would propose, if you had not been engaged to Lord Lambert."

" I am sorry for it," replied Georgina, " if he is serious ; but I should imagine that to be impossible, from only seeing a person once or twice."— " Oh ! but you are much mistaken," returned Lady Newbery ; " for he is

is just the kind of man to be violently attached in a moment. He requires not length of time for consideration, but concludes without hesitation; which, in my opinion, is the way to be happy: for, on the contrary, people that are so very full of reflection, wear themselves out, and render their lives unhappy, in endeavouring to determine, by which means they seldom accomplish any thing."

"Then," replied Georgina, "you are an advocate for quick determination; but do you not think them subject to error? whereas one mistake of importance may render the remainder of life wretched."—"Your ob-

ervation is both sensible and just," replied Lady Newbery; " and yet I cannot give up my good opinion of hasty conclusions, even in points of the utmost consequence, I have so often known them to be successful."

While they were talking, Miss Malcomb came to the door, and was admitted. She had watched Georgina home, and had determined to call; as, by that means, she should have an opportunity of observing if any thing had transpired from Lady Jemima. Lady Newbery had now, from her own observation, added to what Mrs. Haines had told her concerning the very mischievous disposition

tion of Miss Malcomb, taken so great a dislike to her, that she received her rather with coldness. This visible change in Lady Newbery did not pass unnoticed by Miss Malcomb, who was full of observation. She concluded that she was obliged to Georgina for it, and congratulated herself at the prospect she had of such ample revenge. She returned home, bursting with envy and malice, fully determined to set Mrs. Nelson immediately to work. She accordingly called upon her, and wrote the copy of the note that was to be sent to Georgina. She over and over cautioned her to remember the directions that had been given.

The

The unfortunate Mrs. Nelson again promised to fulfil, to the best of her judgment, what she had undertaken; though, in her heart, she was shocked at the wickedness of the plan: but poverty again prevailed over principle, and she determined to overcome the remonstrances of conscience, and think of nothing but her interest and success in this perplexing plan. She had repeated to herself so often what Miss Malcomb had bid her say, when she should first see Georgina, that she had it by heart; but what she most feared, was, that she should not be able to keep up the appearance of deceit that was necessary to save her from being suspected as an impostor.

These

These reflections rendered her extremely miserable; but, notwithstanding, as she had embarked, found it would be impossible to retreat: therefore determined to divert thought till the moment arrived that she was to attend the unsuspecting Georgina.

Miss Malcomb had been so entirely taken up with this treacherous business, that it had prevented her seeing Sir Harry Freeman, as much as he expected; added to which, notwithstanding he was not remarkable for observation, yet he could not help perceiving she was extremely absent, and did not appear quite at ease. This he several times mentioned; but she artfully

artfully evaded giving him any direct answer ; saying, matrimony was a matter of sufficient consequence to occasion an air of gravity. This reply was very well received by Sir Harry ; who, being himself a very innocent character, was consequently the less given to suspicion.

Their marriage was to take place in about a fortnight ; therefore, Miss Malcomb had a great deal of business on her hands, as she never passed one day without seeing Mrs. Nelson to keep up her spirits ; for she perceived that she was hurt at the part she had to transact : added to which, she was sensible Mrs. Nelson's feelings would

would be still more alarmed when she beheld the artless Georgina. All these considerations could not but affect the countenance of Miss Malcomb; which change in her appearance, as well as in her spirits, was too evident to pass unobserved even by her common acquaintance.

Poor Mrs. Nelson was really an object of pity, as she could not banish disagreeable reflections; she was therefore a constant visitor to the servants of Miss Malcomb, who were all much surprized at the notice they observed their young lady took of her; when they knew that it was but a few months back that she was in the greatest

greatest distress, had applied to Miss Malcomb for relief, and met with a peremptory refusal; besides giving positive orders, that no future message would be received by her from Mrs. Nelson. These observations made them suspect, that there was some very particular business in agitation, which interested her so much in favour of Mrs. Nelson.

Thus all her art and caution did not entirely preclude a suspicion of something. Notwithstanding the subject remained a secret, the servants became jealous of the attention which they perceived Miss Malcomb paid to the unfortunate Mrs. Nelson; and determined,

determined, if possible, to find out what subject they were upon, when alone. They accordingly attempted to listen at the door; but found it of no use, as they spoke so extremely low, it rendered it impossible to make out a syllable of their conversation.

There now remained but a very short period for them to be troubled with the company of Mrs. Nelson, as the time was fixed for her seeing Georgina in three days: after that, she would be too much engrossed to spend her time with them. Besides, Miss Malcomb thought it both prudent and necessary for Mrs. Nelson to return to the country as soon as pos-

sible, after having seen Georgina; that being the most likely means of evading a discovery.

Miss Malcomb had been so repeatedly raillied on account of her gravity, that she determined, if possible, to wear a cheerful countenance, notwithstanding the repulse she had met with from Lady Jemima had been a great disappointment to her, as she was vexed at finding the whole of the expence must inevitably fall upon herself. She, however, was consoled with the prospect of success, which she considered as an ample recompence for both trouble and loss.

CHAP.

C H A P. XXVI.

Georgina is much surprized at the appearance and manner of the elder Mr. Preston.

LADY Newbery had forgot to tell Georgina, that she expected Lady Jemima Erwin, Mr. Preston, and his son also, at dinner. She had never seen either of these gentlemen; but, when they arrived, Georgina was much struck with the extraordinary appearance of the elder Mr. Preston. He had determined to be fine; and, for that purpose, appeared in a coat which, in it's day, had been a very costly one,

as it was all covered with embroidery, that time had rendered a copper colour: added to which, the sleeves were so long, that it was with difficulty he kept them out of his own plate, or that of his neighbour. He had laced ruffles, which reached to the ends of his fingers, that were also turned of a copper colour; and, to finish his dress, he wore a large wig with three tails.

He was, apparently, disconcerted; as, at his entrance, the eyes of the whole room were evidently fixed upon him. Lord Lambert whispered Georgina—who could with difficulty refrain from laughing aloud—that he was

was one of the best creatures in the world, but very extraordinary in his appearance. Georgina remarked how fortunate it was that Miss Malcomb was not of the party, as she would have worried him to death.

Lord Lambert then went up to him, and shook hands. Mr. Preston, upon that, resumed a little courage, as he was before much disconcerted at the consternation he had evidently thrown the whole company into; and it was still more mortifying that his son had told him, he would be the laugh of the company, if he attempted to go in that dress: but he would not attend to him, declaring that he

would dress himself as he thought proper; for he should never think of dressing like a boy, with a shallow coat and tight sleeves, pinching him up like a fool, and shoes to the ends of his toes—Not he, indeed, for any body, as he thought himself very properly dressed for his time of life; at least, he was determined to go as he was.

Young Mr. Preston, finding it to no purpose to endeavour to prevail upon his father to make any change, left him to do as his own whimsical fancy should direct. He knew very well, that the consequence of his very ridiculous appearance would occasion a gene-

a general laugh; but, as he frequently did these unaccountable things, they were the less mortifying to his son, as he was known, by all that had ever seen him, to be a very singular character. Yet, notwithstanding these particularities, he was in many respects amiable.

At dinner, he happened to sit next to Georgina. She found him rather troublesome, on account of the length of his coat-sleeves, which once or twice were in her plate. He made many awkward apologies for this misfortune, as he termed it. The colonel then begged to change seats with Georgina;

Georgina; declaring, she must be very unpleasantly situated.

Mr. Preston, who was evidently mortified at the observation, said, he was very sorry he had been so unfortunate as to offend the young lady by the length of his cuffs; but that he would pin them up, sooner than not have her next him. Georgina begged he would not make any apologies about the matter; declaring, that she was perfectly satisfied with her situation. " Well, then," returned Mr. Preston, " you are as sensible as you are handsome; which is more than comes to your share, for I have observed that most beauties are great fools!"

This

This speech, added to the singularity of his manner, threw the whole company into a fit of laughter; which surprized him extremely, as, he said, he could not conceive what made them so merry. “But,” continued he, winking, “let them laugh while I eat; and I wonder who will have the best of it!”

The colonel seemed to look with great contempt at him; but the rest of the company, being less pompous, were extremely entertained: Lord Newbery, in particular, was quite delighted; which Mr. Preston perceiving, addressed himself to him every instant.

Young

Young Mr. Preston could not avoid being mortified at the very strange behaviour, as well as grotesque appearance, of his father. Mr. Preston observed his son was looking at him, by which he guessed he wished him to be silent; and instantly bawled out—“ Aye, aye, you may look! but nobody minds you, I can tell you that; for I will have my way, let it be how it will. I would stay at home for ever, if I was not to say what I liked when I came out.”

The son, who was much provoked, said—“ Good God! Sir, I am sure I had no improper meaning. I am always glad to see you entertained.”—

“ Why,

“ Why, now,” replied Mr. Preston,
“ how can you say so, Tom? when,
you know, in the morning, you beg-
ged I would not talk much, as there
would be strange company, and want-
ed me not to put on this coat and wig !
But I do not chuse to be tutored all
my life ; for, if I have not had a great
education, I know very well what I
say, and what I mean.”—“ Aye, that
you do,” replied Lord Newbery, “ as
well as any man in England!”

The ladies then retired ; and Lady
Jemima declared, she had suffered ex-
tremely for young Mr. Preston; who,
she could perceive, was vastly morti-
fied at his father’s odd behaviour.

“ For,”

"For," continued she, "though I am very much in his company, I never saw him behave so strangely as he did this day; and what made it much worse, was that insolent Colonel Simmons. I was afraid, several times, he would have affronted the old gentleman, as he is sometimes very easily offended."

"So was I," replied Georgina, "almost frightened out of my senses; for I should be excessively sorry to have been the cause of any insolent remarks from the colonel on Mr. Preston."—

"I own," said Lady Newbery, "I was vastly alarmed, as I know the colonel to be capable of saying very

harsh

harsh things, when he pleases; and certainly would on this occasion, if he had not perceived that Lord Newbery paid particular attention to Mr. Preston."

Lady Jemima then said, that she really was afraid that Mr. Preston would grow worse, instead of better; "As," continued she, "the whim of wearing that coat and wig only commenced yesterday, upon his dining with Lord Lambert. But I intend to set them on fire, on my wedding-day. I told his son so; and he declares he will storm the house for a month, as he has more regard for his old trumpery than his whole estate.

He has got an old thread-bare brown coat, that is not worth a shilling, which he wears in common; and, I suppose, intends to continue for some time. I told him, the other day, that his valet's place must be but a bad one; and only observe what a quick answer he gave me! He said, then, he would recommend him to Fanchon, my maid, for a husband; and that would be ample recompence, as her place was worth half a dozen common ones. There was some truth in the remark, certainly," continued Lady Jemima; "as I believe I am more whimsical about my dress than other people."

" If

“ If you are,” returned Lady Newbery, “ you have a right to be so, as your fortune is so very superior to most ladies.”—“ So it is,” replied Lady Jemima; “ and why should I hoard my money? People that do, could they peep out of their graves, would only have the mortification of finding that their heirs would contrive to spend, in a short time, what they had been scraping together all their lives. On that account, I am determined to enjoy the whole of my income. I told Preston so the other day; and he is quite of my opinion, having seen too much of the consequence of a contrary conduct in his

father, who will scarcely allow himself necessary cloathing with a clear estate of three thousand per annum. But, notwithstanding this unaccountable propensity to meanness in the character of Mr. Preston, I must do him the justice to say, that, in cases of distress, his purse is always ready; and he seems to have more real enjoyment in giving his money for the benefit of others, than the rest of the world can boast in spending it upon themselves."

" You surprize me much," returned Lady Newbery, " by the account you have given of Mr. Preston! It will prevent me, in future, from forming

forming hasty opinions of characters. You have," continued Lady Newbery, " raised Mr. Preston so much in my estimation, that I look upon him with the greatest respect; and the coat he wears, which is in itself quite singular—yet, as by that mode of œconomy he is enabled to render the wretched happy, does not that conduct, which before was a matter of ridicule, become both worthy our admiration, and even our imitation?"

"Indeed, I think so," replied Lady Jemima. "It hurt me extremely to see the insolent manner of the colonel to Mr. Preston."—"There is," answered Lady Newbery, "perhaps, not

often to be seen together, two characters so opposite as those of the colonel and Mr. Preston : for, notwithstanding Colonel Simmons possesses double the fortune of the other gentleman ; yet, were you to paint to him the most wretched picture of distress imaginable, I am sorry to say, you would retire from him, leaving him as you found him, neither hurt in his feelings nor pocket. And yet this is a man that the whole world are vain of being supposed to live intimately with, as he has the reputation of being elegant in a degree. His entertainments are certainly very superb, as he never spares expence for the gratification of his vanity."

Georgina,

Georgina, who had remained entirely silent, then said, with great modesty—"I am surprized that my dear Lady Newbery, who justly holds in contempt the character of Colonel Simmons, should, with the rest of the world, desire so much of his company!" Lady Newbery smiled; and said—"The simplicity of your observation I cannot but be diverted with. But when," continued she, "you have been as long in the world as I have, you will know that it is as necessary to fill up our rooms with these kind of people, as it is to adorn them with fine furniture. The difference is," continued Lady Newbery, "that we cannot esteem them; we cannot

cannot become intimate with them; nor could we, should it be necessary, render them the smallest service."

The gentlemen were then coming up stairs, which prevented farther conversation. Lady Newbery immediately went up to Mr. Preston, and engaged him to be of her party at whist, at which he appeared pleased. Lord Lambert was paying his usual attention to Georgina; when Colonel Simmons came up to her, saying—
“ I was extremely alarmed, lest the beauty of Miss Neville’s dress should suffer through that ridiculous old fool, Mr. Preston.”

Georgina,

Georgina, who had so recently heard so charming a character of the gentleman he had spoke of in so ludicrous and contemptible a manner, said, she did not hold the beauty of her gown, even had he injured it, worthy being noticed, as she should have been much vexed to have occasioned him the least mortification.

The colonel was evidently both surprized and mortified at her want of attention to him, as well as with the contempt she had treated what he had said: upon which, assuming an air of great negligence, he said, that, if her good-humour extended to the younger part of their sex in as great a degree

degree as it did to the old, he presumed it would be the occasion of much happiness, as it was certainly in the power of Miss Neville to be the cause either of happiness or misery, as she thought proper.

This fine compliment was received with silence by Georgina ; who, from Lady Newbery's description of Colonel Simmons, could not avoid holding him in the utmost contempt.—Lady Jemima Erwin then joined them, and the conversation became more general.

CHAP.

C H A P. XXVII.

*Mrs. Nelson has an interview with
Georgina.*

THE day was now arrived that had been fixed by Miss Malcomb for Georgina to be seen by Mrs. Nelson. The method they had contrived was, by sending a note to Georgina; signifying that a young woman, whom she had formerly known very well, was in the utmost distress imaginable; and begged she would have the goodness to call at her lodgings, as by that means she would be convinced of the reality of the case.

Georgina

Georgina was from home when this message arrived. On her return, she shewed it Lady Newbery; who said—
“ Well, you can but go and see what it means: a servant shall attend you when you please; and, if it should be a case of real distress, I shall be very happy to join in assisting to relieve her.”

Georgina accordingly set out, in great spirits, and full of the satisfaction that would result from having it in her power to assist some poor unfortunate person. She was directed to go to a stationer's, in Mount Street, where she arrived exactly at the time that had been fixed; and was much surprized, on entering, at being shewn into

into a very handsome apartment, where she found sitting a very beautiful young woman, with three fine children, all remarkably well dressed. She started back upon entering; and said, with some surprize, there must be some mistake, as she came in search of some person in distress; and was retreating, when Mrs. Nelson caught her by the gown, saying—" Stop, Madam; I am the distressed person you come in search of."

Georgina looked at her with the greatest surprize; which she observing, said, her distress was not of a common nature, nor could she be relieved by any person but Miss Neville.

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“ Good heavens!” replied Georgina, “ what can you mean! How can it be possible for me to relieve you, who am an entire stranger?”

“ True, Madam,” returned the trembling Mrs. Nelson, “ you are so; and yet my fate depends wholly upon your goodness and generosity. You can either fix my misery, or relieve it. To you, therefore, I make this supplication,” continued she, falling upon her knees.

Georgina, whose surprize is more easily imagined than described, attempted to raise her; at the same time declaring she might command her service

service in any respect within her power.

Mrs. Nelson then sighed; and said—“ Ah, Madam! you know not how nearly it interests yourself.”—“ How can that be,” replied Georgina, “ when I am so particularly circumstanced as to have no near relations?”

Mrs. Nelson then said—“ Are you not acquainted with Lord Lambert?” —“ Lord Lambert!” repeated the astonished Georgina: “ Yes, certainly ; I know him very well. But what can you mean?” —“ I mean, Madam,” replied the confused Mrs.

Nelson, " that to him I owe all my unhappiness. These children," pointing to them, " are his; and I, Madam—how can I describe so painful a situation!—am the unfortunate mother."

She then burst into tears; and the wretched Georgina stood fixed with amazement and horror. Mrs. Nelson was almost as much an object of pity as her, being ready to sink at the idea of the base part she was acting.

In this situation Georgina remained for some time: at length, recovering herself, she said—" And what is required of the unfortunate Georgina?

gina? What can she do to relieve such distress?"—" Ah, Madam!" returned Mrs. Nelson, " I was happy till he became acquainted with the beautiful Miss Neville; since which, he rejects his once beloved Mary, and her innocent offspring. He has deceived me; I was young; and where is the female that could withstand the entreaties of the engaging and amiable Lord Lambert?"

Georgina stood petrified and lost. Mrs. Nelson continued—" But, to come to the point, he promised me marriage." Georgina screamed at the word; and Mrs. Nelson perceived the colour forsook her face. She

L 3 trembled,

trembled, and found her assistance was become necessary to recover Georgina. She then relented; and, had not the base Miss Malcomb been shut up in the next room, she most certainly had discovered the plan.

It was a long time before Georgina discovered any signs of life: at length, she sighed, and burst into tears. Mrs. Nelson then attempted to soothe her; but she tore from her, entreating she might at least have the privilege of bewailing her miseries alone. Then tearing off both her hat and cap, and looking wildly about her, she said—
“ What do I want with these vanities, which belong alone to the happy?

py? This wretched head can require no farther ornament, except that which Nature bestowed."

Mrs. Nelson was much alarmed at the situation she had thrown Georgina into, and would have given the world to be able to recede. She went up to her; and, taking her by the hand, said—" Do not let your unhappiness get the better of your reason. I will relinquish my claim sooner than see you thus wretched."

Georgina surveyed her with great attention; and said—" Can you give up so easily the father of your children? Then do I pronounce you

an

an unnatural mother; for can the miseries of a stranger induce you to entail wretchedness on yourself and children?"

Mrs. Nelson, during Georgina's speech, recovered in some degree from her fright; and, again resuming the courage she had been almost entirely deprived of, through her concern for Georgina, said—"What comparison can possibly be made between us? Am I not the unfortunate victim of the pleasures of the perjured Lord Lambert? Were not his first vows of eternal love to me? From which he never receded, until he became acquainted with you. How, then, can it

it be expected I can receive the destroyer of my happiness but with the utmost horror! Are you not the cause of my misery? I never discovered the smallest change in the affections of my Lambert, until he became acquainted with you."

Georgina arose from her seat, and replied—" I cannot stay to hear myself so unjustly abused. If I am the occasion of your unhappiness, I am innocently so; for how was it possible for me to be acquainted with Lord Lambert's attachments, previous to my introduction to him? I never heard him mentioned but as the most amiable of men. It would therefore have

have been highly improper in me to have made any enquiry into the life Lord Lambert had led; and, indeed, I must allow, such a conduct would not have been justifiable by any means, as I had even heard him mentioned as a character so very amiable, as to be worthy the imitation of the generality of young men."

"Nor do I imagine," replied Mrs. Nelson, with some quickness, "that my unfortunate attachment to Lord Lambert would be considered as a blemish in his character. On the contrary, the world would be surprised he had shewn so much constancy; but, notwithstanding Lord Lambert is

is considered as being the possessor of so many amiable qualities, I know him too well, not to discover the unparalleled duplicity that lurks under these appearances."

" You have certainly known him much longer than me; and, of consequence, must be a better judge of his follies and failings than I can pretend to be: for, to own the truth, I never could discover, in the character of Lord Lambert, any thing less than an assemblage of the most generous and worthy dispositions."

" Our situations are very different, certainly," replied Mrs. Nelson.

" His

“ His lordship has only discovered to you the amiable part of his character: it is I who am the miserable dupe of his artifice; but still, to entirely lose him, would be my death !”—“ I am extremely surprized,” returned Georgina, “ that you should not have lamented the loss of Lord Lambert before, as you must have heard that he was to be married to Lady Jemima Erwin !”

“ Yes, certainly; I was acquainted with that: but about her I did not so much interest myself; being well convinced, that so plain a woman as Lady Jemima could never engage the affections of Lord Lambert.

Added

Added to which, he has frequently ridiculed her to me; and declared that, if he married her, I should still reign sole mistress of his heart."

"But yet," replied Georgina, sighing, "it would have been equally out of his power to fulfil his promise to you, whether he married Lady Jemima or me."—"That is very true," returned Mrs. Nelson; "but the consequences to me are entirely different, as, by his connection with her, his admiration for me would be rather augmented than diminished by the comparison. Added to which, his fortune would be so much encreased, that it would be in a greater degree

in his power to be kind to me in the pecuniary way, which must naturally be very material, where there are three children."

" I allow the justice of what you advance," replied Georgina; " but yet your situation, in respect to the world, remains in the same point of view as before: for, notwithstanding his affection for you might be infinitely superior to that he could have for his wife, yet the multitude would not esteem you the more on that account—nor do I imagine, if Lord Lambert were to marry you, which I shall soon put it in his power to do, if he thinks proper. But, even sup-

posing

posing all these things should take place, I may be, by you, accused of ill-nature; but cannot help thinking that your situation in the world will remain as it was before, for it is not possible for you to have lived so long with Lord Lambert in secrecy."

Georgina then took her final leave of Mrs. Nelson; saying, as she left the room, that she had nothing to fear from her, as she should shut herself up, for the remainder of her life, from a world in which she had experienced nothing but misery. "Then, Madam, you give up all future thoughts of Lord Lambert?"—"Certainly!" says the miserable Georgina: "I should

M 2 consider

consider myself as very wicked to prevent the happiness of another; and particularly, as you declare he promised you marriage."

" Yes, indeed!" said Mrs. Nelson.
" It was from that promise I left my father's house; who was a clergyman, and lived near Lord Lambert's."

Georgina then answered—" It is enough! I am satisfied!" And hurried out of the house.

CHAP.

C H A P. XXVIII.

Georgina is rendered wretched; and, in her despair, quits the house of her friend.

GEORGINA returned to Lady Newbery's, so overcome with grief, that she immediately repaired to her chamber, as she knew the consequence would be a thousand questions concerning where she had been; particularly, as she had staid so long. She now began to think it would be necessary immediately to remove herself from Lady Newbery's; as, by staying there, she was ever in the way of

Lord Lambert, whom she could not but look upon as the property of Mrs. Nelson. On which account, she determined to take this opportunity; thinking it favourable, as Lord Lambert was gone into the country, for a few days, with Mr. Preston and Lady Jemima, who were married the day before. She concluded to go, after dinner, to Mrs. Haines, and let her know the melancholy situation she was in; and then would determine to fix on some place, out of town, as a retreat. She endeavoured to compose herself sufficiently to form a resolution so material, as she imagined: "For," continued she, "were I to remain here, now that even the day of our wedding

wedding is fixed, my great affection for Lord Lambert might overcome my resolution ; and my humanity for Mrs. Nelson would lose it's force, when put in competition with self-love. For what can the world be to me, when I have lost all that is dear to me in it ? ”

She then recollect ed that, as she spoke aloud, she might be overheard : she also considered, that it was time to prepare for dinner ; and hoped to prevent any questions, by going to Mrs. Haines the moment dinner was ended ; from whence she intended to write to Lord Lambert, to explain to him

him the motive of her elopement, and to send Lady Newbery an apology.

When she went down, she was much disconcerted at finding Colonel Simmons alone in the drawing-room. He immediately came up to Georgina; declaring, he was the most fortunate of men to have thus unexpectedly an opportunity of declaring his passion for Miss Neville. Georgina then begged to know what motive he could have for professing a passion for her, when he well knew she was engaged to Lord Lambert. He said, he certainly could not deny his having heard of such an engagement; but that he had also heard, from Miss Malcomb, that he might

might venture to speak on the subject, as she believed the match was broke off between you and Lord Lambert: " On which account, I took the liberty of mentioning my attachment, which I hope Miss Neville will believe to be sincere."

Georgina then stopped him from proceeding any farther, by saying, that whatever intelligence he might have gained from Miss Malcomb, she begged leave to say, it could not be of the smallest service to him; being fully determined, if she did not marry Lord Lambert, to remain single. She, however, begged he would accept her thanks for the honour he had conferred

ferred upon her; declaring it to be entirely out of her power to benefit by it, as her heart was no longer at her own disposal.

Colonel Simmons then bowed; and said, that notwithstanding his admiration of her must be an endless source of wretchedness to him, he hoped she would find in Lord Lambert all the perfections she merited in a husband. Georgina from this concluded, that Colonel Simmons had heard the history of Mrs. Nelson. Lady Newbery then came in, which prevented any farther conversation.

After dinner, Georgina proposed to
Lady

Lady Newbery calling upon Mrs. Haines, who agreed to the proposal; and Georgina went with a mind oppressed with the deepest melancholy. She found Mrs. Haines at home, and by no means well. Mrs. Haines observed her gravity, and kindly enquired into the cause; which Georgina told her without reserve. Mrs. Haines sighed; and said—
“ What has my amiable Georgina done, to deserve such insupportable misfortunes! But why, my dearest girl,” continued she, “ should you run away? Perhaps you may be deceived. It may all, probably, be the invention of some envious people, to prevent your happiness; as I have always

ways heard Lord Lambert spoken of as a most amiable character."

Georgina sighed; and said, the proofs were too strong to admit a doubt. Then told her, she had quite determined in what manner to act upon the occasion. Mrs. Haines said, she hoped her dear Georgina would command her assistance in whatever way she thought best upon the occasion. Georgina thanked her; and said, she should wish to board somewhere in the country, where she should be unknown, and could live a retired life.

Though happiness was not for her,

Mrs.

Mrs. Haines endeavoured to make her give up the thoughts of retirement; but to no purpose, she was fully determined: which her friend finding, said, she knew a clergyman's family, near Windsor, that would be extremely happy to have her. Georgina said, that would suit her; and it was fixed that she should go the next day.

Georgina then took her leave of Mrs. Haines, saying, she had much to prepare, as she should not acquaint Lady Newbery of her departure; but would leave a note to apologize for her conduct, as her spirits would not again bear to repeat her misfortunes.

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She took leave; and Mrs. Haines assured her of unalterable friendship.

Georgina returned to Lady Newbery's; and immediately repaired to her chamber, in order to put up her clothes as well as she could: at the same time sending word to Lady Newbery, that she was unwell, and begged to remain in her room for the evening. She then sat down, and endeavoured to compose herself sufficiently to write her letters to Lord Lambert and Lady Newbery. This required all her fortitude, and she almost repented she had gone so far: but, again recovering her nearly-lost resolution, she took her pen; and, filled

filled with horror and despair, wrote as follows—

" MY LORD,

“ YOU will be much surprized at the subject of this letter; which, not to keep you in suspence, is an eternal farewell from the unfortunate Georgina. Ah! too cruel Lord Lambert, how could you so artfully deceive me? Why did you not openly avow your connection with the beautiful Mrs. Nelson? I leave you, to put it in your power to render her that justice she lays claim to from you; and, as I could not support the mortifying consequence of a divided affec-

tion, preferred a state of fixed wretchedness, which must inevitably be the result of my choice. It is my request that you do not attempt to find me out, as all future pretensions from you to me will be treated with the contempt they deserve. I remain, my Lord,

“ Your humble servant,

“ GEORGINA NEVILLE.”

“ MY DEAR LADY NEWBERY,

“ I can scarcely tell how to apologize for my conduct; but flatter myself, when informed of the unfortunate

tunate occasion of it, you will forgive an appearance of rashness that was unavoidable. Lord Lambert can best explain the rest. The wretchedness of my situation is not to be described; therefore, all ceremony must give place in a case of despair like mine. I could not summon sufficient resolution to take leave; but hope you will both forgive, and sometimes bestow a thought on, the wretched

“GEORGINA NEVILLE.”

When Georgina had wrote these letters, she reflected that she was now again reduced to her former humble situation, when it was in her power to

be the wife of an earl. But, again considering, she could not but give the preference to dependance, humiliating as it was; when, by avoiding it, she must inevitably be rendered compleatly miserable: for she concluded, a character that was capable of the duplicity Lord Lambert had shewn, was ill calculated to confer happiness. And, again, when she recollects the beauty of Mrs. Nelson, with the innocence of her children, she could not prevail with herself to suppose the passion he affected to have for her, could ever equal that which he really possessed for Mrs. Nelson; especially when added to the length of time he had been attached to her.

These

These mortifying reflections determined Georgina to pursue her plan of becoming a recluse, however distressing the result of such a conduct might prove. She resolved to summon all her fortitude and resolution to assist in this most afflicting situation ; being convinced that, while life remained, she could never forget this too charming invader of her happiness.

Lady Newbery was rather surprized at Georgina's staying in her room ; but concluded she was, perhaps, busied in arranging her clothes for the intended marriage. On which account, she determined not to intrude upon her ;

her ; little imagining that she, who was that day week to be married to **Lord Lambert**, was preparing for a departure, both from her intended husband and friends.

Georgina determined to leave Lady Newbery's early in the morning, and take with her a few necessary articles of dress, leaving the remainder to be sent after her by Mrs. Haines. When every thing was arranged, she went to bed ; but sleep was a stranger to the miserable Georgina, and she arose before it was light. When the servant came in to make her fire, she desired she would not take the trouble ; but would send for a coach, as she had promised

promised to go very early to Mrs. Haines, who was ill. The girl looked at her with attention; and said—"Lord, Madam! I was afraid you was ill yourself, you look so very pale! But," continued she, "there are no coaches yet upon the stand; and, if you will give me leave, I will get you some breakfast, and by that time we may be able to procure a coach. But, indeed, I think you had better not go out without something: I am sure my lady would be very angry with us, if she knew we let you."

Georgina could not help smiling at the simplicity of the girl, and answered her good-humouredly; saying, she would

would take her advice. Jenny accordingly got the breakfast with the greatest expedition.

Georgina did not let these attentions go unrewarded, but could scarcely prevail on the girl to accept of her liberality; who said, she hoped to wait on her again and again. Georgina, with much difficulty, evaded the observation of this scrutinizing servant, whose significant looks convinced her she suspected that something particular was in agitation.

Georgina at last got away, but not without Jenny's calling to one of the footmen to attend Miss Neville; which,

which, as she was really going to Mrs. Haines's, did not interrupt her. She accordingly went, and found Mrs. Haines worse than the day before. Georgina felt much hurt that her present unhappy situation would not permit her to stay with Mrs. Haines, who seemed to require the healing balm of friendship more than physic, as her spirits were much affected. Poor Georgina, whose obligations to Mrs. Haines were so very great, felt severely on this trying occasion ; which her friend perceiving, begged she would not think of staying. " Your own unhappiness, I am sure, is sufficient for you, without any addition." She then told Georgina her house-
keeper

keeper had been sent, the moment she left her, to prepare Mrs. Smith for her reception; saying—" You must ask me no questions, all is arranged; and something tells me, my amiable Georgina will not remain long there. But, for the present, I hope it will meet with her approbation. There are," continued she, " two young women, her daughters; who, notwithstanding their education cannot qualify them to be fit companions for Miss Neville; yet, I hope, their obliging attentions may be acceptable."

Georgina thanked Mrs. Haines; and said, she could not consider her-

self

self an orphan, when possessed of such a friend. Mrs. Haines replied—"I suppose you know that Miss Malcomb is to be married to-morrow to poor Sir Harry Freeman? I pity him much, as he must inevitably be rendered miserable with such a wicked young woman." Georgina said, perhaps she would mend after marriage, as she would not have so much use for her envy. But Mrs. Haines shook her head; saying, she never recollects any change where the heart was known to be bad. "We may easily improve any little imperfection in the disposition," continued she; "but a corrupt heart generally remains unalterable."

The carriage then came to the door; and Georgina endeavoured to take leave of her kind friend, to go to her new habitation. Neither were capable of speaking: upon which, Georgina tore herself away; and, flying into the carriage, remained lost in thought, till she perceived herself at the gate of the good Mr. Smith, who came to meet her at the door. He was a well-looking, elderly man; and seemed to be much delighted at the appearance of Georgina, whose heart was so oppressed with her own misfortunes, that his civilities were nearly lost upon her. He told her, he was much ashamed that his wife and daughters were not at home to receive

ceive her ; but said, they would return in a very short time, as they were only gone to a few shops, to get some articles that were desired by Mrs. Haines's housekeeper for her room.

Georgina then begged to be shewn to her chamber ; saying, she had some trifles to arrange. She accordingly went up stairs ; where she found a very compleat drawing-room, bedchamber and dressing-room ; at which she was surprized, when she heard they were all for her. But Mr. Smith told her she was to have the entire use of them ; as Mrs. Haines wrote word, that Miss Neville frequently preferred being alone to com-

pany. This very kind thought of Mrs. Haines much delighted Georgina, as the present situation of her spirits could ill bear with constant society.

Just as Mr. Smith left her, she heard a loud talking in the hall, of —“Lord, mamma! only think, the young lady come, and no fires! I told you how it would be; but you would not have them made.”—“Well,” replied the other sister, “they can be soon put on; and I dare say the young lady will not care about it.”

Mrs. Smith then came up stairs, who was a very common kind of woman;

woman ; and kept bawling all the way to the servant, to know why she had not made the fires. " And you," said she to poor Mr. Smith, who looked in a fright the moment she appeared, " to be such a fool, not to order her ! Why, Miss must be perished ! she looks quite pale with the cold, poor thing ! and must have a bad opinion of our house-keeping, at this rate."

Mr. Smith appeared ashamed, and begged she would be quiet. Georgina stood silent and surprised at the unusual noise the good lady made. At length, one of the daughters approached Georgina, saying, she was

O 3 sorry

forry every thing was not ready for her reception ; but told her, they would for the future take more care. Georgina thanked her kindly ; saying, she saw nothing amiss, every thing being much beyond her expectation.

Miss Smith begged she would believe, she was sorry to have shewn her temper so much ; adding—“ When people are so stupid, they would provoke a saint.” Georgina agreed with her, in hope of quieting her ; in which she succeeded.

Mrs. Smith then enquired, what time Georgina would fix for dinner, as her hour should be theirs ? Georgina

gina was much disconcerted by their great civility; and said, she could by no means admit them to make any alteration on her account, as she was accustomed to change of hours.

Mr. Smith, who was too amiable to need an appearance of finery to make him respectable, said—“ Come, my dear,” to his wife, “ what signifies an affectation of grandeur to the young lady? Truth is best. Our usual hour is two o'clock; but, if three will be more agreeable, I am sure I shall be very happy to make it so.”

Georgina was just thinking of an answer; when Mrs. Smith coming up to

to her husband in a great rage, stopped her, saying—" Lord ! who bid you to speak ? I wanted to appear genteel ; but there is no such thing, where you are such a blab ! Why, I know very well, Miss has been used to five or six o'clock ; only, now you have mentioned your vulgar hour, she will not own it."—" Indeed," replied Georgina, " I had much rather dine at three than any other hour, since you insist upon my naming it." Georgina then begged, they would excuse her, while unpacking the few things she had brought with her; which hint they took, and left her.

Poor Georgina much lamented the family

family in whose house she now resided; but would endeavour to be alone as much as possible, as her spirits were too much agitated to receive amusement, were they ever so capable of rendering it to her.

C H A P. XXIX.

*Mrs. Nelson repents at the part she has
acted against Georgina, and Miss
Malcomb ridicules her.*

AFTER the departure of Georgina from Mrs. Nelson, Miss Malcomb came running into the room to her, in vast spirits ; saying—“ You behaved admirably, dear Nelson ! But I was in such a fright once, that I thought all was over : I really was ready to burst with rage at you ; but, as it has ended well, I am satisfied. I have now done with it, thank God ! for

for to-morrow will be my wedding-day."

"Lord, Madam!" replied Mrs. Nelson, "sorry I am to have undertaken such a business; for certainly I shall never be happy again, when I consider how miserable I have rendered a young lady that appears so very amiable!"—"Oh!" replied Miss Malcomb, "I was aware of your being pleased with her manner, notwithstanding I guarded you so much; she has such an artful softness about her. I am sure it has cost me enough. Here I have got fifty pounds to give you; and, by the bye, you must be off

off immediately, for fear of a discovery."

Mrs. Nelson then repeated, that she wished she had not been prevailed on to come; saying, she was convinced, that money earned by such base means could not come to good.

"Phoo!" returned Miss Malcomb, "you are a fool! Why, you may take a little shop in the country with the fifty pounds, and be quite snug and happy."—"Oh, no, Madam!" returned Mrs. Nelson, "I shall not try any such thing, for I am sure I should not succeed. I would give the world I had not done it; for
I have

I have never slept peaceably since I undertook it; and am certain I shall be worse now. Would to God, when I saw the young lady so ill, I had quite relented; and really should, only for fear of your anger."

" I am glad you did not," returned Miss Malcomb; " for I am sure, if you had, I would not have paid you an halfpenny of the fifty pounds."

— " I should not care about that," replied Mrs. Nelson, " if my conscience were at ease. I have been poor a long while; but, in all my distress, never felt half so miserable as I do now." —

" Why, one would suppose you had committed murder, you make such a

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fuss!" replied Miss Malcomb; but I assure you, I will not pay sixpence of the money, until you promise me faithfully, that you will not discover the business; for I should never be able to shew my face, I should be so ashamed."

" Well," replied Mrs. Nelson, " I am glad to find you can allow so much. You know I shall be out of the way; therefore it will not be very easy for them to find me out; and you may be sure I shall not run after them, to acquaint them of what I am so ashamed to have had a hand in."

" Well, then," replied Miss Malcomb,

comb, " I shall send you the money to-morrow, and you must be off directly ; for I am rather in a fright, even now. Here," said she, " is something to pay your journey ; and you shall certainly have the fifty pounds in a day or two."

Miss Malcomb then left Mrs. Nelson ; who was glad when she was gone, that she might recover herself after so much agitation. She then attempted to amuse herself with packing the things for her journey. While she was so employed, her little boy came to her ; and, looking very arch, enquired what ailed that lady that had been with her to-day ! " Oh," says

Mrs. Nelson, "she was unwell."—

"Why," replied the boy; "she looked very well when she came."

Mrs. Nelson was much hurt at the observation which a child of six years old had made; and, hugging him to her bosom, said—"What is there in this world a tender mother cannot do for the benefit of her children? Have not I robbed myself of my peace of mind? Even conscience itself is disregarded by tenderness for them!"

While she was employed in reflecting on her past conduct, the chaise came to the door, to take her and the children out of town. Miss Malcomb had

had sent it so quick, lest Mrs. Nelson should be dilatory. She accordingly hurried her things together; and, with a heavy heart, departed.

C H A P. XXX.

Lady Newbery is much distressed by the loss of Georgina, and Lord Lambert is not to be appeased.

WHEN Lady Newbery got up, she was vastly surprized to hear of Georgina's being out. When she enquired, and found she had gone so very early, was convinced there was some mystery in the case. She also recollect^{ed}, that Georgina had appeared extremely agitated the day before, and had kept in her room the whole afternoon. She now repented of not having gone up to her. After some

some time considering, she determined to send for her to Mrs. Haines ; who sent word back, that Miss Neville had left her above an hour.

Lady Newbery then grew very uneasy, and went up into her room ; where she observed Georgina had taken away all her undress clothes, but left those that were new, and intended for the wedding. While looking about, she observed a key in the glass drawer. She directly opened it, and discovered a letter for herself, and another for Lord Lambert. She tore open that addressed to her, and was so astonished, as to remain for some time motionless. She expected Lord

Lambert's

Lambert's return that evening, as he had wrote to Georgina the day before. She heard her say, that he would be in town at that time.

While she was hesitating what was best for her to do, was informed that Lord Lambert was in the drawing-room. She dreaded the meeting him, having such an unpleasant, as well as mysterious account, to acquaint him with concerning his beloved Georgina. At length she went ; and Lord Lambert met her, saying—"Where is my Georgina?"—"I cannot tell!" replied Lady Newbery ; I am distract-ed!" And was proceeding, when she was prevented by Lord Lambert approach-ing

proaching her, and demanding of her Georgina, his beloved wife. "I left her with you, Madam," continued he, "and of you I require her."

Poor Lady Newbery trembled at the rage that possessed Lord Lambert, which rendered him quite unreasonable, and made him unfit to receive the account she had in her power to give him. His manner had so alarmed her, that she entirely forgot the letter that had been left for him. At length, recollecting herself a little, said—"I will ring the bell, and you shall hear from the woman, Sir, who last saw Miss Neville, all that passed between them."

He

He was so much agitated, that he made no reply ; but when Jenny appeared, he questioned her closely. Hearing all she had to say, he moved towards Lady Newbery ; and said, with more calmness—“ You must forgive my behaviour, when you consider my situation.”

Lady Newbery, with great good-humour, held out her hand to him, as she was too much affected to speak more on such a subject. He then said, he would go and demand Georgina of Mrs. Haines. Lady Newbery, just at that instant, recollected the letters which Georgina had written to Lord Lambert and herself. She hurried

hurried after him, and begged he would stop, as she had a letter for him.

“ Good God !” exclaimed he, “ here is the hand of my Georgina !”—“ You frightened me so much,” replied Lady Newbery, “ that I forgot it entirely.” He first read his own several times, then the others ; and, after some hesitation, returned Lady Newbery her letter. He then begged she would read his ; which she did, with the greatest astonishment, saying—“ This is all, to me, so mysterious, that I am quite lost in conjecture !”

“ It is not so to me,” replied Lord Lambert ; “ as I am now convinced
there

there is a female enemy to Miss Neville in the case: and that person I strongly suspect to be no other than that fiend, Lady Freeman; for this day that unfortunate, good-humoured fellow, Sir Harry, was married to her."—"But why," replied Lady Newbery, "should you suspect her?"—"Because," returned Lord Lambert, "I am not acquainted with any person I can suppose capable of so vile an action, except herself."

"But how she could manage it, I cannot conceive!" replied Lady Newbery. "Oh! she has more art than ever was possessed by any of her sex!" returned the provoked Lord Lambert.

"But

“ But I am determined to fathom this scheme, that now wears such an appearance of mystery. My first visit is to Mrs. Haines; and from her to Lady Freeman, whom I mean absolutely to accuse without ceremony; and, by that means, shall be able to discover, from those changes of countenance which an accusation of such a nature must occasion, whether she is guilty or not. If so, I shall demand satisfaction of Sir Harry; and if I do not, must endeavour to find it out elsewhere.”

Lady Newbery then begged he would not let his warmth of temper get the better of his understanding, as

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she was convinced Sir Harry was incapable of any thing of the kind. Lord Lambert said, that what she advanced was true; but that revenge he was determined upon, if it cost him his life.

Lady Newbery then regretted having given Lord Lambert the letter, and again begged he would consider the consequence; and how easily all that had happened might be rectified, if managed with prudence and conduct. "What, then," resumed Lord Lambert, "would you wish me to bear tamely what has happened, and to sit down, preferring to be deemed a coward for life, than demand that

that satisfaction I have a right to from the wicked assertions of Lady Freeman?"

"I think," said Lady Newbery, "it might be all settled, if you would allow yourself time to cool. When your passion subsides, reflection will be the consequence; you will then be able to decide with judgment and propriety."—"Then you would advise me," replied Lord Lambert, "to sit down in my suspense, and leave Miss Neville in her present misery, merely that I may give myself an opportunity of cooling? But you do not know me; as, the longer I reflect upon injuries, the stronger is my re-

Q 2 fentments

sentment: therefore, the sooner I go to work, the less mischief is likely to ensue. You cannot but allow the case to be past sufferance—Am I not considered by Miss Neville as a villainous, deceitful character? Is she not, by her own confession, rendered wretched, through the artifice of that woman? I must, therefore, think mine a case that admits of no delay. The most daftardly coward could not do more than stifle his resentment; for he could not forgive such an offence.”

Lady Newbery, finding it in vain to attempt mitigating his anger, repeated, that her only wish was, that it might end amicably, as she was convinced

vinced that Sir Harry had the greatest regard both for him and Miss Neville. Lord Lambert then took his leave, and left Lady Newbery very much alarmed at the consequences she apprehended from the hasty temper of Lord Lambert.

C H A P. XXXI.

Georgina repents of her rashness in quitting the house of Lady Newbery.

GEORGINA found her spirits so affected, as to fear she could not continue in her present situation. She then began to repent of her rashness, and even accused herself of cruelty, in not giving Lord Lambert an opportunity of apologizing for the duplicity of his conduct to her: “ For, perhaps,” thought the unhappy Georgina, “ had I heard what he had to say, I might have found him less blameable.

blameable. Half what I have heard may be false: I may be the dupe of envy and hypocrisy. If so, how have I injured the most amiable of men! and, if otherwise, what occasion had I to run away? Fool that I was, to prefer this retirement to a scene of gaiety! But it is done, and cannot be recalled. If I have been deceived, the insolent style of my letter must offend him for ever! he will never again bear the sight of me!" But, upon reflection, she concluded that he must be guilty; for who could ever invent so vile a scheme? Besides, the natural manner of Mrs. Nelson convinced her that it must be so.

Two days had now elapsed, and she had heard nothing from Mrs. Haines, which made her fear she was grown worse.

Dinner being now ready, Georgina was obliged to join the family; which to her was extremely distressing, as their over attention and civility, in the present melancholy situation of her spirits, quite overcame her. Added to which, Mrs. Smith's voice was so very shrill, as well as loud, that to Georgina, who had been unused to any thing but the elegant conversation of people of fashion, was so very disgusting, that, without affection, she could scarcely endure it.

Their

Their manner was also equally disagreeable, as they were perpetually teasing her about the little she eat. Mrs. Smith, in particular, constantly said, she was fearful there was nothing at her table which Miss Neville liked.

Poor Georgina, whose miserable state of mind occasioned the loss of her appetite, could not find words to appease the volubility of Mrs. Smith on this subject. She used her utmost endeavours to assure her, that she had by nature a small appetite; but all to little purpose, as she could not prevail upon her to believe what she had taken so much pains to assert.

Soon

Soon after dinner, they were surprised by a carriage stopping at the gate. Georgina instantly perceived it to belong to Mrs. Haines: accordingly hurried to hear how she was. But, the moment she met the eyes of the good Mrs. Gilbert, read that the news she had to communicate was melancholy. Georgina was scarcely capable of making an enquiry; and much less was Mrs. Gilbert of speaking, as, the instant she saw the friend of her lady, it was such a renewal of her grief, that she sobbed aloud.

Poor Georgina wanted no more to convince her of the melancholy occasion of her unhappiness; and endeavoured

voured to console her, notwithstanding her own situation was so truly pitiable. She then regretted, more than ever, leaving town. After some time being spent in tears, both by Georgina and Mrs. Gilbert, she told her that, a fews hours after the death of her dear lady, which happened very suddenly, Lord Lambert had called, and enquired for Miss Neville. " The servant told him, he could not tell where to direct him at present; and then acquainted him of the melancholy loss we had just sustained. He desired the lad would make enquiry where you were, and gave him a guinea. The lad asked me, and I told

told him. I hope, Madam," continued she, " this was not wrong?"

Georgina answered, that it was immaterial. Then desired to know how long it was since the lad had communicated to Lord Lambert the intelligence of where she was? She said, she had but just told him before setting off for this place. " But," continued she, " he ran like a penny-post to let his lordship know; as, he said, it would be cruel to keep him in suspence, he appeared so truly unhappy."

Georgina sighed; and Mrs. Gilbert said—" Lord, Madam! I hope you will

will have him; for, to be sure, he is the sweetest gentleman I ever saw: and we often say at home, that certainly you were made for one another, there is such a likeness between you! And I hope, Madam, you will excuse my boldness in saying so much to your face." Georgina sighed; and said, she was afraid all was over between them. "God forbid, Madam!" returned Mrs. Gilbert: "I am still in hope to see the happy day."

Georgina could not support so affecting a conversation, and burst into tears; which made Mrs. Gilbert quite unhappy that she had mentioned the subject.

Mrs. Smith, who had been dying with curiosity to know all that passed, now came up stairs, to beg Mrs. Gilbert would take some refreshment, which she refused ; but Georgina insisted on her having a glass of wine. This she accepted, and then took her leave. Mrs. Smith was very desirous of staying, by way of consoling Georgina, which she refused ; saying, her grief was much too great to admit of any consolation for the present. Mrs. Smith then wished her better, and left her.

Georgina gave way to every melancholy thought that her present unhappy situation occasioned ; and to so great

great a degree, that she was rendered, by the excessive agitation of her spirits, so affected, as to find she could not any longer keep up. Accordingly, in the greatest despair, threw herself upon the bed, where her disturbed imagination would not permit her to get rest. The melancholy reflection, that she had now lost both husband and friend, was her constant attendant; for she concluded that Lady Newbery must be offended with her for ever, at the abrupt manner in which she left her house, and not even having sufficient confidence in her friendship to inform her of the reason. Thus did she perplex herself, till nature was quite exhausted, then fell fast asleep.

While Georgina was asleep, Mrs. Smith came to let her know tea was ready; but, seeing her so quiet, left her. She had not been long down stairs, before she was surprized by a carriage stopping at the gate. It contained Lord Lambert, who enquired for Miss Neville. He was told she was at home, but that she was not well, and endeavouring to get some rest. He was much affected at the account; but begged to be admitted, saying, he had business of the utmost importance to impart to her, which could not admit of delay.

Mrs. Smith's curiosity was again much raised, which made her with great

great civility invite him into her parlour; saying, that she would then go up stairs, and see if Miss Neville was awake. Lord Lambert begged her to go very softly, and by no means to awaken her on his account, as he was not in any hurry. On her going up, found Georgina as before. She returned, saying—“ She is so fast asleep, it would be the greatest sin in the world to wake her, poor young lady! for I don’t think she gets much rest.”

Lord Lambert then enquired of Mrs. Smith, what time Georgina came to her, and who brought her there? To which she answered, that

Mrs. Haines had taken the apartments, and agreed for the board also. Lord Lambert then enquired, how Georgina had been in health since she had been there? "Why, as to her health," returned Mrs. Smith, "she makes no complaint to me about that; but, in my life, I never saw so young a lady so out of spirits. She seldom speaks to either me or my husband, more than just "Yes," or "No;" and, as he says, it does not seem to be from pride, but downright melancholy: but we cannot, by any means, learn what ails her, she is so silent. I was sorry," continued she, "that my daughters were obliged to return to school; for, perhaps, she might have liked

liked their company better than ours; but, as they are just finishing their education, thought it a pity they should lose their time."

"True, Madam," replied Lord Lambert, who had no patience, when she changed the subject from his beloved Georgina. He was not the least surprized at the account of her spirits, as it was what he expected; but was rather pleased, as it convinced him of the reality of her attachment to him. He then enquired what servants Miss Neville had; and was told—"None. But it is her own fault," continued she, "as poor Mrs. Haines wished her to have her own servant;

servant; but she would not have any thing for them to do, having scarcely ever rang a bell since she came here."

Just at that moment Georgina awoke, and called for a light. Lord Lambert begged Mrs. Smith would have the goodness to let Miss Neville know that Lord Lambert was below-stairs, and desired the favour of seeing her. Mrs. Smith, who had no idea, from the freedom of his manner and plainness of his dress, that she had been entertaining a person of such consequence, appeared much disconcerted, and begged he would excuse the reception he had met with. She was proceeding, when Lord Lambert stopped

stopped her, by saying—" There is not the least reason for an apology; and pray do not let me be the cause of Miss Neville's waiting."

Mrs. Smith then curtseyed, and went up to Georgina, who asked the hour, and how long she had been asleep? Mrs. Smith could not answer her questions, on account of the news she had to impart. She was breathless; which Georgina perceiving, enquired into the cause. " Lord! my dear young lady," said she, " I am quite struck dumb with surprize!"— " Why," replied Georgina, with her usual ease, " what hath happened?"— " Happened!" repeated Mrs. Smith;

Smith; “ Lord, Madam! why, just as I got down stairs from you, and had drank one cup of tea, thought I heard the sound of a carriage; and in an instant there came, sure enough, a loud ring at the gate. I sent Mary out to see who it was, as John was from home ; who brought me word, it was a gentleman that wanted Miss Neville.”

“ Good God !” returned Georgina quickly, “ where is he ? who is he ?” —“ Why,” replied Mrs. Smith, “ if you will stay, I will tell you all about it. Why, let us see now—you put me quite out ; for my poor head is not one of the best.”

Georgina

Georgina grew quite impatient; and said—" For pity's sake, tell me who it was that enquired for me."—" Lord, Madam!" said she. " Well, I declare, if I have not forgot the name, with your hurrying me so; but I know he is a lord."—" Good God!" says Georgina, " surely it was not Lord Lambert!"—" Aye, that was the name," said she. " And what did he say?"—" It would take up an hour to tell you. He said he wanted to speak to you; and there he is below now, waiting for you."

" Heavens!" replied Georgina, " why did you not tell me this before? Pray, desire him to walk up
stairs."—

stairs."—"What! into this room!" returned the tiresome Mrs. Smith. "Oh, no!" says Georgina, who was much vexed, to think that she had kept him waiting so long; "in the drawing-room, to be sure!"—"Well, I did not know any thing about the matter: I am sure I always wish to do for the best; but one never knows when one is right." When she got down, Lord Lambert was impatiently walking up and down the room. Perceiving her, he said—"How did you find Miss Neville? I was fearful, by your staying, that she was unwell."—"Oh, no," replied Mrs. Smith; "she seems better, and desires

your

your lordship will walk up into the drawing-room."

Lord Lambert made no hesitation, but instantly ran up stairs. Georgina trembled when she heard his well-known foot; and thought to herself, that, notwithstanding his ill-behaviour, she could not but feel happy at the sight of him once more. "Alas!" sighed she, "what will become of me! for, without him, I am certainly wretched; and with him, what prospect of happiness is there for me?" She then attempted to open the door, but hesitated; which he finding, saved her the trouble, by opening it for her.

They both for some time stood fixed and silent. At length, Lord Lambert said—“ What have I done to offend my beloved Georgina ! and can she refuse to believe me, when I declare, upon honour, that I am innocent of the cruel charge alledged against me ; and that I do not even know the name of any such person !”

Georgina, who was as willing to believe as he could wish her to be, held out her hand, to confirm to him, that no doubt remained with her, as her heart was too full to speak upon the subject. Lord Lambert then repeated all that had passed between Lady Newbery and himself since

since her departure; and Georgina, whose eyes were now open to the cruelty that had been practised upon her, gave him an exact account of her conference with Mrs. Nelson. Lord Lambert declared, with vehemence, that he would not sleep until he had fathomed this vile plot to the bottom, and revenged himself upon the contrivers of it.

Georgina surveyed him with some attention; and, perceiving that he was much agitated, concluded she would, as it was late, prevail upon him to sleep at the inn, and breakfast with her next morning; when they would consult together upon a plan

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both of discovery and punishment of the wicked persons that could so cruelly occasion them so much unhappiness. This fortunate thought of Georgina's seemed, in some degree, to appease his wrath; and he agreed to the proposal she had made. He then begged she would forgive the violence of temper he had discovered. "When you consider," continued he, "that to-morrow was the day appointed for our mutual happiness, has not my charming Georgina been rendered miserable, and even suffered in her health? Have not I also been tortured by suspence and disappointment? No!" continued he, "the man that can tamely forgive

forgive such injuries as those, must be a rascal and a coward!" Georgina did not attempt to contradict him; being convinced that, by such a method, she should only irritate him the more. She therefore remained silent.

Mrs. Smith, whose time of supper had been elapsed near an hour, began to grow impatient; and determined, at length, to send to know whether she should send supper up to them, or if they would do her the honour of supping with them? Georgina begged that Lord Lambert would accompany her down, to accept of their invitation; saying, she was convinced

it would flatter and please them very much. And Mrs. Smith made a number of awkward apologies for the plainness of her supper; saying, if she had known of the honour of such company, she should have provided accordingly; but that, as for Miss Neville, she never attempted to please her, as she never eat an ounce at a time of any thing. Lord Lambert said, he hoped her appetite would mend; and Georgina, smiling, answered, that she thought it was mended already. Mrs. Smith answered—“ Aye, aye, I always said it was what I find it; but hope we shall not lose her on the occasion.”

Lord

Lord Lambert said, that must undoubtedly be the case, as he came purposely to accompany Miss Neville to town, who is, in fact, his promised wife. Mrs. Smith then changed countenance; for, where her interest was concerned, all other considerations lost their force. Georgina, who perceived this change, and guessed the occasion of it, replied, that her very kind attention to her, since she had been there, should certainly be amply rewarded. This assurance from Georgina in some degree quieted her fears, and the supper went off with great good-humour.

Lord Lambert said, he was much mortified

mortified at not having the pleasure of seeing Mr. Smith; which pleased her very much. He then took his leave, promising to wait on Georgina by ten next morning.

Mrs. Smith, finding the time of her young guest's stay so very short, followed her up stairs, and repeated the articles that had been bought on her account. Georgina said, she should certainly be handsomely compensated for them all. Her avarice being thus satisfied, she took her leave, and withdrew.

C H A P. XXXII.

Lord Lambert has an interview with Sir Harry Freeman, and is reconciled to him.

WHILE Lord Lambert was gone to bring Georgina, Lady Newbery was employed in considering how she should prevent the mischief that was apprehended would be the consequence of the very rash as well as violent temper of her friend, Lord Lambert. She at length determined to send for Sir Harry Freeman, and tell him all she knew of the matter; and endeavour to prevail on him to know

know the truth from Lady Freeman. She accordingly did so; and he immediately came to her.

Lady Newbery, without reserve, acquainted him with every circumstance relative to this wicked affair. He was much surprized at their having any suspicion of Lady Freeman: but Lady Newbery again begged he would take particular pains to come at the truth; which he promised, notwithstanding he was evidently much hurt at the charge.

Just as he had taken his leave, Lady Newbery was surprized by a visit from Lady Jemima Preston, who

who she did not know was returned from the country. Lady Jemima told her, that she waited upon her to enquire after Miss Neville; "Who," said she, "I am informed, has left you." Lady Newbery then told her every circumstance relative to this unfortunate event. Lady Jemima shook her head, and said—"I am very sorry to own that I am acquainted with the whole affair, which I was weak enough to promise not to discover; but really my conscience will not allow me to keep my word." She then related all that had passed between herself and Lady Freeman.

Lady Newbery was much surprized

at

at the pains that had been taken to render miserable two amiable young people. Lady Jemima then said, she had just thought of a method that would relieve her from the blame Lady Freeman would load her with, if she discovered her; which was, to send immediately for Mrs. Nelson to town, and offer her a handsome present, if she will own the truth to Miss Neville. " This would not only prevent my being blamed, but will ease the conscience of the poor young woman; who, I understand, was very unwilling to undertake it: but Lady Freeman both insisted and bribed her; until, at length, she was prevailed upon.

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This proposal was highly approved of by Lady Newbery; who, having got Mrs. Nelson's address from Lady Jemima, accordingly wrote to her, desiring she would immediately come to town, as she wished much to speak with her. Lady Jemima then took her leave of Lady Newbery; saying, she hoped it would be amicably settled.

Soon after her departure, Lord Lambert and Georgina arrived. Lady Newbery received them with real pleasure; and they both joined in begging she would forgive the trouble they had occasioned her. She replied, with her usual good-humour; de-

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claring, that seeing them once more restored to happiness would be a sufficient gratification for the anxiety she had suffered on account of her dear Miss Neville.

Georgina, who had, ever since her departure from Lady Newbery's, regretted it, and also blamed herself for the rashness of her conduct, now felt so much ashamed, that she could scarcely meet the eyes of her old friend; which Lady Newbery perceiving, held out her hand to Georgina, saying—" You have nothing to accuse yourself of, as few people, at your age, would have acted with half the discretion and propriety: on which account,

account, I will not hear a word more of apology from you." Georgina did not attempt to make any answer, as she was overpowered by the extreme kindness of Lady Newbery.

Lord Lambert then said, he had prevailed once more on his dear Georgina to fix the important day upon which his happiness so much depended. " This day week," continued he, " is, I hope, to terminate our misfortunes. We shall then put it out of the power of the world to separate us again."

Lady Newbery then acquainted them with what she had done relative

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to Mrs. Nelson. Georgina turned pale at the name of a person who had been the occasion of so much misery to her; which Lord Lambert perceiving, said—“ Surely, my dearest Georgina is convinced; if not, a few days must remove every doubt.”

Georgina, whose sensibility was shocked at the idea of a suspicion remaining, after he had taken such pains to convince her of his innocence, regarded him with so much expression, that Lord Lambert was perfectly satisfied. Lady Newbery then said, that she had one favour to beg of Lord Lambert; which was, that he would take no steps toward revenging the

the behaviour of Lady Freeman, until they heard what Mrs. Nelson said. "And then," continued she, "surely her behaviour, when exposed to the world, will be sufficient punishment." Georgina joined with Lady Newbery; and Lord Lambert was so over-powered by their persuasions, that he could not refuse promising to relinquish his intended revenge.

Lady Newbery then acquainted Miss Neville that her kind friend, Mrs. Haines, had left her a legacy of ten thousand pounds. Lord Lambert said, he was sorry for it, as he thought her a treasure that required not the addition of fortune. Geor-

gina bowed, and thanked him; saying, she was convinced his opinion of her was extremely flattering, and only wished she might merit a continuation of such sentiments.

At that moment, Sir Harry Freeman was announced. He appeared quite disconcerted at the sight of Lord Lambert; but at length, recollecting himself, he accosted his old friend with as much ease as such an unpleasant situation would admit. Lord Lambert, on the contrary, reddened with anger at the sight of Sir Harry; which Georgina perceiving, looked at Lady Newbery with so much meaning, that she could not but

but understand her, and, equally with her, wished for an opportunity to mention the subject; as, by that means, she was in hopes of convincing Lord Lambert, that Sir Harry was more to be pitied than blamed. She was much hurt, on perceiving Lord Lambert could not prevent discovering his resentment, notwithstanding he wished so much to conceal it.

Thus situated, it was awkward for Lady Newbery to commence a subject, without introduction, that required so much nicety; particularly as a general silence had taken place. At length, Georgina enquired after

Lady

Lady Freeman: upon which Lord Lambert, bursting with anger, replied —“ How can my amiable Georgina mention the name of a woman, that has taken so much pains to render her miserable?” Then, darting a look of the utmost ferocity at Sir Harry Freeman, said—“ Excuse me, Sir Harry; but my provocation gets the better of my endeavours to stifle a resentment, that is the result of the most unmerited ill-usage of the best and most amiable young creature in the world.”

Sir Harry begged Lord Lambert would allow him to speak; as he perceived him to be extremely agitated. Lady Newbery also joined in the request;

quest; and Sir Harry accordingly said—That to attempt to make any apology for the unfeeling conduct of Lady Freeman towards Miss Neville, would be ridiculous in the extreme; nor could he conceive what her motive could have been for such a behaviour; but begged Lord Lambert would believe, that, if he would point out a method of apology from Lady Freeman to Miss Neville, that he would not only propose it, but insist upon a compliance to any concession that should be demanded from her.

Lord Lambert appeared a little appeased, and said, he did not know what recompence could be adequate

to

to the sufferings of either of them—that Miss Neville's health, which was naturally delicate, was evidently affected through the great agitation of her spirits.

Georgina, with her usual sweetness, then said—“But now, Lord Lambert, that happiness is again our own, why should we let it be intruded upon by any resentment?—This is beneath us. Lady Freeman's disappointment, and inward feelings, will be sufficient mortification, without any addition.” Lady Newbery joined in the opinion of her young friend; and Lord Lambert could no longer retain any resentment against Sir Harry,

Harry, whom he could not but consider as an object of pity, from his being united to so very odious a character.

At that instant, they were surprized by the entrance of old Mr. Preston, who begged he might congratulate Lord Lambert upon the return of Miss Neville—"For, egad!" continued he, "I began to think she had given you the slip, and I should have been very sorry for you; for, in my opinion, you may go a great way before you meet with such a one. I really began to fear, the colonel's fine clothes had dazzled her eyes, as would have been the case with most young ladies,

ladies, for all he was so yellow and ugly." The drollery of Mr. Preston could never have been more welcome than it now was, to Lady Newbery and Georgina; as his good-humour communicated itself to the whole room, and made even Lord Lambert forget the subject he had just been so deeply engaged in.

Sir Harry then said, he must take his leave; upon which Lord Lambert shook hands with him, saying, he might depend that all his intended resentment was done away. Sir Harry then said, he hoped so, and should ever feel himself under the greatest obligations, both to him and

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Miss Neville, for their condescension, in so generously forgiving such treatment. Georgina begged he would say no more upon the subject; and he withdrew.

When he was gone, Mr. Preston said—"Aye, God help him! he has got a vixen, if ever there was one in the world."—"That he has, indeed," replied Lord Lambert; "he will have a fine time with her, I'll warrant him; for she will never leave off her tricks."

"I thought Lady Jemima would have been a sad plague to my son," said Mr. Preston, "with her little

whims and vanity; but is now so altered, she is not like the same creature."—"I really think, she appears quite reasonable," returned Lord Lambert; "and those whims were her only defects, as she was always both good-humoured and generous."—"Generous! O yes," continued Mr. Preston; "she is, indeed, too generous. What do you think she has done, but given that Miss Sanderson, who has been with her about two years; that has gone, like a fool, and married Parson Harding:—he, poor fellow, could hardly keep himself; his whole income not amounting to much more than a hundred a year. Miss Sanderson never said a word of
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the matter, until it was over; and then, she made such a pitiful story of it, that Lady Jemima has settled sixty pounds a year for life, besides presents in abundance.”

“ Why, I cannot say I think much of that,” replied Lord Lambert; “ as she will be only just enabled to exist, and that with the strictest œconomy. Lady Jemima, in my opinion, could not, as a gentlewoman, do less; for she ought not, certainly, to suffer a person, who had ever been considered as a friend and companion, to want the necessaries of life—her goodness of heart would not admit of that.”

“ Why,” replied Mr. Preston, “ nobody can possibly be more averse to a want of generosity than myself; but, in the case of Miss Sanderson, must say, I never much liked her; as I think her deceitful, and very far from meriting the friendship Lady Jemima bestowed upon her. She has been with her near two years.”

“ Well,” replied Lord Lambert, “ I must differ from you; I do not mean in respect to her disposition, as I never liked her; but still, humanity would not permit me to allow a person that I had admitted into my house, in the character of a friend, to be in any necessity it was in my power to relieve.

Besides,

Besides, Miss Sanderson gave up her time to Lady Jemima."

" Well," replied old Mr. Preston, " what could she have done better with her time? She is not so elevated, that I ever perceived; therefore her time, instead of turning to any account, would only have hung heavy upon her hands."

Lord Lambert laughed, and said—
" Well, the trifles Lady Jemima bestowed upon Miss Sanderson, will never be felt by her."

" As to that," returned Mr. Preston, rather hurt at the observation;

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“ I should not regard twice the sum to a deserving object—I give more than that myself.”

At that moment arrived Mrs. Nelson; upon which the gentlemen took their leave, and left her to Georgina.

CHAP.

C H A P. XXXIII.

Georgina has an interview with Mrs. Nelson, and forgives her.

GEORGINA desired Mrs. Nelson might be shewn up stairs, into her dressing-room, where she intended following her immediately, to hear what apology she could possibly invent, for the unparalleled cruelty of her conduct towards her: but the idea of again beholding the woman, who had occasioned her so much misery, seized her so violently, that she could scarcely summon sufficient resolution again to meet her. Thus torn with irresolution,

solution and aversion, she determined to beg the favour of Lady Newbery to go with her, which she immediately consented to do; and only ridiculed Georgina for a timidity, which, she observed, belonged to the aggressor, and not to the injured: upon which, Georgina endeavoured to overcome the great agitation that had possessed her. They accordingly went up into the apartment which Mrs. Nelson had been shewn into.

On their entrance, they discovered this unfortunate young woman, so lost in thought, that she did not immediately perceive them; but the moment she did, threw herself at the feet

feet of Georgina, imploring her forgiveness of a conduct that her poverty, added to the entreaties of Lady Freeman, had prevailed upon her, entirely contrary to her inclination, to be guilty of.

Georgina, who was shocked at the countenance and altered appearance of Mrs. Nelson, raised her, saying, she could easily forgive her, notwithstanding the part she had been induced to act against her had been a source of infinite pain and misery; yet, as the consequence had occasioned her no real injury, she should be ashamed of harbouring a resentment so mean and ungenerous.

Mrs.

Mrs. Nelson, who had known but little of the world, except what she had seen in the house of Lady Malcomb, was surprized at the generosity of sentiment she perceived in Georgina; and was so much overcome by it, that it almost rendered her incapable of proceeding in her recital of the method which Miss Malcomb took to prevail upon her to act the dreadful part she had done by Miss Neville. At length, encouraged by the great good-nature of Lady Newbery and Georgina, she resumed sufficient strength of mind to conquer her timidity, and gave them an exact account of all that had passed between Lady Freeman and herself; which much

much astonished Georgina, notwithstanding she was prepared to believe so ill of Lady Freeman. Lady Newbery, on the contrary, was not the least surprized, as she had heard the same account from Lady Jemima.

Mrs. Nelson then informed them, she had received the promised fifty pounds from Lady Freeman; which she intended to return; saying, she was convinced, that such ill-earned pelf could be of no use to her; and that, notwithstanding she and her children had nearly felt the want of the necessaries of life since she had seen Lady Freeman, she could not prevail

prevail with herself to break the guilty note.

Lady Newbery and Georgina were much pleased at this trait which Mrs. Nelson gave of herself; and Georgina, in the kindest manner, promised her future protection. Mrs. Nelson, then, before them, sealed up the note; in which she had wrote Lady Freeman word, that she could not make use of it. Lady Newbery then desired Mrs. Nelson would take some refreshment; then rang the bell, to desire she might be shewn into the housekeeper's room.

Georgina, filled with pity at the melan-

melancholy situation of Mrs. Nelson, renewed her promise of protecting her; and also, that she would consider of some means of providing for her and her children; which goodness so astonished Mrs. Nelson, that she gazed with silent wonder on her benefactress, and was totally incapable of thanking her. Georgina then ran down stairs, with a heart made light and glad by self-approbation; but Lady Newbery followed, not much pleased with the offer Georgina had made Mrs. Nelson, which she considered as highly imprudent.

When they were both seated in the drawing-room, Lady Newbery en-
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quired, with great seriousness, how she could possibly make such an offer to an entire stranger, and one who, to her, had been the occasion of so much unhappiness. "Besides," continued Lady Newbery, "you have certainly been premature in making any promise to Mrs. Nelson, without the approbation of Lord Lambert, who will most probably disapprove of your ever taking the smallest notice of a woman who, whatever apology she may make for her behaviour, certainly can merit no favour or protection from you: besides which, your promised kindness was so unbounded, you were not satisfied with limiting your favours to her alone, but with the addition

addition of her family, let it be ever so numerous. I am sensible," continued Lady Newbery, " that your intention was humane in the greatest degree; but you must forgive my observing the great imprudence of it."

Georgina, who had listened with the greatest attention, advanced, and then with great modesty answered, that she could not altogether take so much blame upon herself; but that, if Lord Lambert disapproved of her conduct, she should be truly mortified; adding, that had Lady Newbery seen Mrs. Nelson before this, she could not but have been interested in her favour,

at the evident change that was so apparent in her countenance, and which must be the consequence of extreme penitence and remorse. All these appearances were to her the symptoms of a good heart. Lady Newbery agreed with her, but still persisted in saying, that she should first have consulted with Lord Lambert. Georgina smiled; and said, she did not fear his anger upon the occasion.

While they were talking, Lord Lambert called in again, being curious to hear what had passed between Georgina and Mrs. Nelson. He listened with great attention to the account they gave; but, when Lady Newbery

Newbery tenderly mentioned the very kind offer Georgina had made to Mrs. Nelson of her protection, Lord Lambert looked rather surprized; but, perceiving Georgina's confusion, said—“ I am convinced my Georgina, whose penetration is so very clear, would not have proffered her friendship where it was unmerited.” Georgina felt greatly confused and mortified at this speech from Lord Lambert; but, at length, endeavouring to overcome these unpleasant sensations, said—“ I believe I may very probably have erred in judgment; but, as humanity was the motive for my making so injudicious an offer, flatter

myself that this will plead my excuse."

Lord Lambert surveyed her with the kind attention that is ever the attendant of a sincere and real affection; and, taking her hand, said—"Who can possibly attempt to censure a conduct which was occasioned by such generous sentiments? All that has been promised, I will take care shall be performed. Lady Jemima, I am sure, will assist about the children; and the mother we may place in some useful situation in our own family.

Lady Newbery then said, that as Georgina had not yet hired a servant,

she

She thought Mrs. Nelson might be very capable of such an employment. They accordingly agreed to make the proposal to her, which they were convinced would be accepted with great joy. Lord Lambert then took his leave; and Lady Newbery sent for Mrs. Nelson, who received the intelligence with the most unfeigned gratitude. She then informed her, that the marriage was to take place in two days; on which account, she could not return into the country, but must send for her family to town, when they would consider of some plan of educating and providing for them.

Lord Lambert then returned again,
to

to inform them he had just been with Lady Jemima, who had promised to take the entire charge of the eldest boy, whom she admired very much. Lord Lambert again took his leave; and the ladies went to dress for dinner. Lady Jemima was charmed at her success; and Mrs. Nelson, who was an extraordinary good hair-dresser, was to dress her that day.

CHAP.

C H A P. XXXIV.

AT length, the day arrived that was to compleat the happiness of Lord Lambert and Georgina. His dress was elegant, without finery ; and Georgina, who was ever remarkable for the simplicity of her taste, wore a fine clear book muslin night-gown, trimmed with fringe over the palest pink lute-string. Her fine light hair was elegantly dressed in curls, with a small quantity of powder. Her hat was also of pale pink, very small, and adorned with white feathers: it was put on with a slight inclination to the left.

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In short, the whole of her dress impressed the beholders with the highest opinion of her taste. Lord Lambert was so much charmed with her appearance, that he could not help declaring he had never seen his lovely Georgina look to such advantage as on this day. The ceremony was performed, by special licence, at Lord Newbery's. The company present were Lord and Lady Newbery; Mr. Preston, and Lady Jemima Preston; and Mr. Preston, senior; who was in such spirits, that he enlivened them extremely.

After the ceremony was over, they set off for Lord Lambert's villa, which was

was situated near the Thames, at Richmond: Lord and Lady Lambert in their chariot; Mr. Preston and Lady Jemima in theirs; and Lord and Lady Newbery, with the elder Mr. Preston, in Lord Newbery's coach. The day was spent, as is usual upon such occasions, in mirth and happiness. Lord Lambert paid the most unaffected attention to his beloved Georgina, and she received his kindness with real affection. The week passed equally happy as the first day; when the party returned to town, as did Lord and Lady Lambert to their house in Pall Mall; where, in a few days, they received a visit from Sir Harry Freeman, who appeared very dejected.

dejected. Lord Lambert enquired into the occasion; and Sir Harry shook his head, saying—“ You, my lord, may consider yourself as the most fortunate of men; and I am sorry to add, that I am truly miserable.” Lord Lambert, who could not but understand Sir Harry, said, he was very sorry for him; but hoped Lady Freeman would mend as she grew older. “ That,” replied the unfortunate Sir Harry, “ I have little hope of, as I never heard of the heart that was naturally bad being improved by time.” He then informed him, that Lady Freeman was already quite sick of him; that Colonel Simmons was her constant attendant; and, in

in short, that the general tenour of her behaviour was so unguarded, as well as contemptuous to him, that he was determined to be separated from her, as she rendered his life quite insupportable.

Lord Lambert was much concerned at the account Sir Harry gave of his situation; and said, he hoped that Lady Freeman's ill usage of Lady Lambert had not been the occasion of their disagreement. Sir Harry answered—"Not the least;" as she declared, she held all they could say or do upon the occasion in the greatest contempt. Upon which Sir Harry concluded, that any farther reproach

would only add to his unhappiness, by provoking her; and could not possibly have any good effect, as she was a stranger to shame. He then took his leave; declaring his earnest hope that another week would restore his peace. Lord Lambert wished him more happy, and they parted.

He then went up to his beloved Georgina, to inform her of what he had heard from Sir Harry Freeman; at which she was much concerned, as she was convinced that Sir Harry would have overlooked her errors, had there been a probability of any amendment: but his determination was a convincing proof to her, that
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the behaviour of Lady Freeman was too bad to be forgiven. Lord Lambert and Georgina were much concerned at the very unfortunate situation of their good-humoured friend. At the expiration of the week, they were surprized to find that Sir Harry had effected a separation from Lady Freeman ; and that Colonel Simmons had refused to marry her. On these accounts, she was so much disappointed and mortified, that it determined her to quit a country in which she had rendered herself too conspicuously odious to continue.

The colonel, now tired of her person, had no farther inducement to

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continue with a woman whose only recommendation to him was novelty. She accordingly set out for the Continent, unattended, except by Lady Malcomb, who was too affectionate a mother to abandon her child, notwithstanding her guilt. After her departure, Sir Harry lived much in the society of Lord and Lady Lambert; where he had an opportunity of observing the amiable conduct of the much admired Lady Lambert. She lived to have several children. The girls, it is hoped, will inherit the elegant accomplishments and lovely dispositions of the mother; the boys, the generosity and worth, the animation,

tion, noble spirit, and conciliating manners, of the father.

Lord and Lady Lambert were firmly united in the sacred bonds of pure affection and full confidence. They exhibited to the world a fidelity and attachment of the most perfect kind. In the attention which was paid to the education of their children, in giving them virtuous, liberal principles, and forming their taste aright, they set a pattern which ought to be universally imitated. Their example was a constant lesson of instruction.

CONCLUSION.

OUR little history may serve, in some sort, to shew in what the real beauty of human life, as well as of female excellence, consist; and that, without conscious goodness, misfortunes cannot be borne with that becoming dignity and elevation of soul which, in a state where the scenes are so frequently shifted, is so necessary. It also appears, that when an idle Curiosity is in active operation with Envy and Ill-nature, they generally render those who are under their malignant influence, odious to others, and miserable.

rable in themselves: but that an inflexible adherence to rectitude, to that nice honour which is the finer part of virtue, will bestow esteem and happiness. It may likewise be added, that when delicacy of mind, or the finer feelings of the heart, are uniformly governed by reason, prudence, and a sense of what is becoming, they will prove a source of the most pure and refined enjoyment.

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